1: Jenness--56
116, 172, 342

(1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo

"One would hardly expect then to find in the Copper Eskimo country huts of wood and sod such as dot the coastline everywhere from Alaska to Baillie island. Traces of these, however, are not altogether lacking, for ruins of old wooden houses have been noticed at various places from Cape Lyon to Coronation gulf. There are six or seven on the small islands off Cape Lyon, and six, very old and covered with grass, about fifty yards from the shore between Deas Thompson and De Witt Clinton points, a little east of the Roscoe river. Fourteen similar ruins near the mouth of the Inman river were examined by the Rev. H. Girling, and the implements he recovered from them conclusively prove that the inhabitants of that site were western natives.

These places are outside the limits of the Copper Eskimo country, but there are other ruins of the same type that lie within them. Four or five were found on Chantry island in the spring of 1918, and about the same time seven others were noticed at Cape Krusenstern, and one on an island off Locker point. Mr. W. G. Phillips, the Hudson Bay Company's factor at Fort Bacon (Bernard harbour), tells me that the houses of Cape Krusenstern were built of wood, rock, and a good quantity of whalebone, and that the specimens gathered from them were strange to the Copper Eskimos. In one of the houses there seemed to have been an open fireplace, for the gravel was burnt in one spot and massed together with oil; in each of them there was a well or hole in the middle lined with flat stones. Captain Bernard's discovery of wood and sod houses on south-

west Victoria island has been mentioned in the previous chapter. Almost certainly these dwellings were erected by western natives several generations ago, for the Copper Eskimos build their houses of snow blocks only, and never on any occasion employ wood in their construction."

1: Jenness--58-59 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"The only types of dwellings known to the Copper Eskimos are the snow hut and the tent. Sometimes a traveller finds them with neither, but camping instead under the open sky; only rarely, however, for it is seldom that a man can sleep with comfort out of doors in this region. Occasionally of course night overtakes a hunter without a tent, and without any means of building a snow hut. He will then wander round for a time, searching for his camp and when weariness overcomes him, squat down on the ground or snow for a while and fall asleep, with his chin resting on his chest, his legs outstretched and his arms withdrawn inside his coat and folded against his body. In time the cold awakens him and he rises and resumes his journey. In June and July, sometimes too in August, a party will often leave its tents and journey off to hunt or fish for a few days in some adjoining district, carrying only sleeping bags and a few skins. Such open-air bivouacs are very pleasant as long as the weather remains fine; the warm hours of the morning are generally given over to sleep, and the party does not stir till nearly noon. Should rain come on or a fog arise they can soon construct a rude shelter by converting their ice-chisels, fish-spears and walking-sticks into tent-poles and stretching their skins around and over them. At the end of May, 1915, we made a trip of some 50 miles to meet the Eskimos of Prince Albert sound. Two families in our party left their tents behind. At first they merely set up a wind-break, driving a row of sticks into the ground at an inclined angle and spreading their skins over them; later, when we had to wait for several days at the rendezvous, they ranged

their poles in an oval and made a regular tent. Then a blizzard struck them, and the howling [59] wind drove eddies of snow inside their tent under its flapping edges, so they built a low circular wall of snow-blocks and raised their tent on that. A few weeks later in similar circumstances they made a wall with turf instead of snow. It was only about a foot high, but it anchored down the edges of their tent and kept the rain from flooding it. In August of the same year, during a gale of driving sleet and snow, two men without a tent stretched some deerskins over a gap between two crags and weathered it out in comparative comfort. McClintock mentions the case of an old woman near Pond's bay (Pond's inlet) who had neither hut nor tent, but a sort of lair constructed of a few stones and a seal-skin spread over them, so that she could crawl underneath. (1) These, however, are exceptional cases. Normally the Copper Eskimo lives in a snow-hut through the winter months, and moves into a deer-skin tent as soon as the warmth of spring renders his house untenable."

"1. McClintock, p.133."

1: Jenness--59-60 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 333, 342

"The first step (2) in constructing a snow-hut is to find a suitable site. Not only must the snow be deep enough but it must also possess a certain firmness. It must not be crumbly, as it is when granular, or soft as when freshly fallen, otherwise the blocks will fall to pieces at the slightest touch; as for its depth, that should be at least a foot. There are two ways of cutting snow-blocks, horizontally and vertically, and it depends on the depth of snow which one the native will employ. In the former method a rectangle is cut to the size required and the block is undercut for as far as the knife will reach. A kick below will now release it, and slightly raise one side so that it can be lifted in the hands. Sometimes careful pressure with the foot on top will break it off where a kick beneath would crack it. The depth at which the undercut is made decides the thickness of the block. This is the only method possible when the snow is shallow. Vertical cutting requires deep snow, for here it is the width of the block that is regulated by the depth. A few rapid cuts with the knife, a few vigorous kicks to scatter the loose snow, and a space is cleared from which the first block can be cut away. A cut on each side gives it its length, and the knife is run backwards and forwards underneath to give the width of the block. One face and the sides are now clear, and all that remains

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"2. Cf. Stefansson's account in Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 6 et seq., and Amundsen, Vol. II, ch. VIII.

to be done is to determine its thickness and separate the remaining face. This is the only delicate part of the operation. The first cut must not be deep, otherwise the block will be sure to crack on one side before the knife has reached the other. Usually the man runs his knife along the back face twice, cutting free about half its surface; then he stabs it down about the middle, when the block breaks off as a rule and falls towards him. If this should not release it he stabs it again on the side that he thinks is holding, and sometimes on the other side as well. Once the first block has been extracted the others proceed more easily, since there is more open space in which to work and their shape is already half outlined. Vertical cutting is quicker and easier than cutting horizontally, besides which there is more snow in the same surface area. Then too the deeper down you cut in making your house the less high you have to build. It makes no difference if you come to ice, for a floor of ice is quite as good as one of snow. A deep snow-drift gives you half your wall already built. With a small house almost all the blocks required can be taken from the floor, but should more be needed they can soon be obtained outside and pushed in through an opening cut in the bottom of the wall.

One or sometimes two men therefore build up the house from the inside, while the housewife and the children make an outer rampart all around it about six inches or a foot away, and fill the interspace with soft snow. The arrangement of the first tier of blocks naturally determines the size and shape of the subsequent house. A Mackenzie

native who was building us a hut in [60] which to shelter the dogs made the diameter of his first tier far too great, so that instead of his walls approaching in a perfect Byzantine dome, they mounted skywards almost to a cone. A more skilful workman might have made a symmetrical dome despite the diameter, but the art of building snow-huts is fast dying out amongst the western natives.

The critical stage in the building of a snow hut comes with the second tier, for then the spiral form commences and judgment and experience are required to know at what place to begin. The younger men often seek the advice of their elders; and I have seen even an old woman correct a youth and show him where to begin his coil. Often the spiral form is barely noticeable when the hut is finished, and one has the impression that the blocks are set up anyhow. The neatest workmen make their blocks rectangular, and lay them so that the joints will come in steps, no block falling exactly over the one below. As each is laid in place the knife is run along the joints and the block punched sharply on the top to fit it tightly against its neighbours. Thus the builder follows round his spiral, curving gradually inwards till only a small opening remains above. The final stage is the most critical of all, for the roof will collapse if made too flat, and part of the structure may cave in from an accidental knock, or the unskilful jointing of a block. The joints are therefore bevelled, but even so it is sometimes necessary to hold one block up with the hand till it is wedged securely by the next. The keystone requires skilful handling. It is roughly trimmed to shape, then pushed up through the

opening in the roof and gently lowered from above. The left hand poises it above the hole, while with the right the builder trims its edges and those of the blocks against which it sets.

The structure is now complete, but many chinks and gaps remain where the blocks fit imperfectly together. These must be closed from without, if the housewife has not already done this after making her rampart. Small blocks of hard snow are jammed into the larger gaps, and all the joints are filled with soft snow, which acts like mortar and cements the blocks together. It matters little if a few chinks still remain on top, for the warmth inside the hut sets a current of air flowing upwards and outside; but unless the lower wall is tight the house will be very draughty and uncomfortable. This cannot happen as long as an outer rampart is built all round, but the temporary hut for one night's occupation only has usually no such rampart; instead, soft snow is packed tightly round the base of the lower tier, and into all the joints.

Not every hut is built so carefully. Sometimes the shape is oval, the length much greater than the breadth. Then the side walls are gradually brought together till a row of longer blocks laid across like beams will close the roof. But this is a very slovenly way of building. More often the hut is dome-shaped, but the blocks are entirely unsymmetrical, being set up in any manner so long as they hold together. The spiral form is then quite absent, although the same care is still required in beginning the

second tier. Even the rule that no joint should come directly above the one below is not adhered to, and the joints come anywhere. This in fact is the usual form of hut, and the perfect dome built with symmetrical blocks arranged in a continuous spiral which earlier writers have so consistently depicted is of very rare occurrence. In fact not every native has the necessary skill to make it, besides which it requires more time and labour. But every man can build a snow-hut of some kind or another, and must indeed at the end of each day's journey that he makes in winter. He may have travelled many miles, dragging a heavy sled, and darkness is almost upon him before he begins his hut; naturally, then, he is much too tired to care about its shape so long as it provides his family and himself with a comfortable shelter for the night."

1: Jenness--60-61 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 352

"The hut that we were describing was complete indeed, but it had neither furniture nor door. If snow-blocks from without were used in building it there [61] will be a hole in one of the bottom blocks through which to pass them in; if no such hole exists one is quickly cut out with the knife. Now the woman goes inside, carrying her snowshovel with her, levels the floor in the front half and raises a bank behind it to form the sleeping-platform. Often in building the hut the man will cut his blocks from the front part only, leaving the snow behind at its natural level, which is now one tier above the floor; this gives a platform already made, and he has merely to pass in the furniture for his wife to arrange in order."

1: Jenness--61 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"While the wife is thus busy within, the man must construct a passage for his hut. This is a simple operation, merely the building of two straight walls about three feet apart and from four to five feet high roofed over at the top with horizontal blocks. Before he begins it he closes the hole through which the furniture was passed and does not cut the doorway until after the passage is finished. The hut is thus hermetically sealed, and time is given the woman to light her lamp and warm the room before her husband enters. In making the door he pokes his knife through the wall at the end of the passage, cuts out an arch about two feet high, and calls to his wife within to give it a kick; the block falls outwards into the passage and is quickly dragged away. The man's work is now finished, save that he must pile all bags and pokes and lashings, that are not wanted in the house, on top of the rampart outside, and dispose his sled in safety for the night."

1: Jenness--62-63 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"Houses intended for more than one night's occupation nearly always have windows made of ice. These are chipped out with ice chisels from fresh-water lakes or streams in the fall of the year, and are roughly squared so that each side will be from 2 feet to 2 feet 6 inches long. The window is let into the wall behind the lamp, or sometimes just above the door, either as soon as the hut is built or more usually on the following morning; it thus lights up the fore part only, but the snow itself is semi-translucent, so that as long as the sun is shining a window is hardly needed at all. In the twilight hours of midwinter, however, even the front of the hut beneath the window is only dimly lit up, while the back and sides are in deep obscurity. One house we saw had a window in its passage, but this was very unusual; apparently the family has an extra 'pane' which they determined to put to use. Very large houses, especially dance-houses, often have two 'panes' let in side by side, with but one block of snow between them. The frost which settles on these windows is scraped away [63] with a woman's knife, just as the

natives farther west scrape their gut windows; these latter, by the way, are totally unknown in Coronation gulf. (1)"

"1. The owner takes his window out to pack on his sled at every migration, and his wife hands him the bedding through the hole it leaves in the wall. Mr. Stefansson saw a number of deserted huts with such holes in them, and his first interpretation of them as windows was as correct as his second. The window is naturally set above or nearly above the lamp, and as this may be on either side of the door, the window may be also, not, as Mr. Stefansson thought, on one side only. Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 247."

1: Jenness--63 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 345

"Some houses have a small recess built in a corner near the door; this is for storing meat, or for housing a litter of pups. Sometimes the passage is broadened in one place for the same purpose. Often two houses are joined together, or several unite round a common forecourt which forms the village dance-house."

1: Jenness--63 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 333, 342

"The Eskimo is very skilful in modifying the shape of his hut to suit his needs. One snow-hut in which I lived was dripping badly, besides which it had an awkward shape, so its owner knocked out the roof and part of one side and built it up afresh. The warmth of the hut had transformed the inner face of each snow-block into ice to the depth of about an inch, so that he had to chop it away with a small hatchet. This transformation of the snow to ice explains the solidity of a snow-hut, which is so great indeed that a full-grown man can stand on the very top of the roof without its collapsing. The same native who had thus re-shaped his dwelling once made a chimney of snow-blocks in a small snow hut when we were trying to cook inside with chips of driftwood. He derived the notion no doubt from the stove pipes at our station, but it showed at least his versatility and his skill in handling snow."

1: Jenness--63 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 354

"A snow-hut is a very comfortable dwelling even in mid-winter, unless the temperature falls unusually low and a blizzard is raging out of doors. Even then, in a well-built hut with a long semi-subterranean (2) passage, the natives are not uncomfortable, provided that the lamp can be kept burning to its full extent."

"2. i. e., partly under the surface of the snowdrift."

1: Jenness--63 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 356

"If the temperature of the hut rises above the freezing-point, the ceiling immediately begins to drip. This often happens when the meals are being cooked, or when the house is filled with people. Slight dripping can usually be stopped by chipping away the ice at the place from which the drops are falling, or by holding against it a lump of snow, which will freeze against the wall and lower the temperature at that spot. Neither method, however, will permanently stop it, unless the temperature of the hut is lowered as well. Often when the ceiling of a hut is thus plastered with lumps of snow, they themselves become soaked like sponges and fall on the inmates' heads; I have seen this happen to a native lying in his sleeping bag, with a rather amusing result. The only sure remedy is to knock a small hole in the roof, so that the cold air streaming in will freeze the walls again. Old huts are pitted with many holes where the roof and walls have dripped and melted away. By day the natives take no notice unless the weather is stormy, but at night, before going to bed, someone will often go outside and close all the chinks with snow. It is not always pleasant, though, to stumble about in the darkness and clamber up on to the roof, so frequently they merely block the largest holes from inside with scraps of skin or mittens, or with handwipers of ptarmigan skins, and let the others remain. The door is closed with a block of snow, dragged inside and set in place from within, with loose snow cementing the edges. It is not wise to close up the

hut too tightly, however, or the air becomes foul and suffocating. In the fall of 1914, I was travelling with a Copper Eskimo across Dolphin and Union Strait, and carefully closed up every chink and cranny in our first snowhut, in order to increase its warmth. Early next morning our lamp refused to burn, and it was only then that we realized how impure the air was and quickly broke open the door. (3)"

"3. Cf. Stefansson, My Life with the Eskimo, p. 245 et seq."

1: Jenness--64 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"In the fall, before the sea is frozen solidly over, the Eskimos often build their huts on the very edge of the land. (1) The rise and fall of the tide then frequently splits the ice, and cracks the hut above it. The roof threatened to cave in on this account in one house, but its owner propped it up with a pole, one end of which rested on the floor while the other was jammed beneath a board laid flat against the roof. In 1915 our first snow-hut in the fall was built above a tide-crack, and during the night we were awakened several times by loud reports like gun-shots; next morning we found our hut was split from one side to the other. On another occasion the house-wife was dressing and stepped from the sleeping platform to the floor, when suddenly she sank up to her knees in a pool of slush ice where the tide had oozed up through a crack. Even when badly cracked, soft snow jammed in the seams will hold a house together, unless the cracks are opened further by the next high tide. The walls show wonderful stability, and even half a hut will stand alone and unsupported.

"1. Mr. Stefansson (Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol. XIV, pt.I, p.50) says that the Kanghiryuarmiut are the only Copper Eskimos, except perhaps the Ekaluktomiut, who ever build winter houses on land or even near land. This is exactly where every tribe does build them in the fall, and again in the late spring."

The size of the hut depends on the number of occupants, but the length of the passage is determined by other considerations, mainly by that of warmth. A hut that is built for one night only has hardly any passage at all, while those intended for longer occupation have passages ranging in length from 15 to 40 feet. They are often made quite short at first, and extended when a gale arises. Sometimes the entrance is slightly curved away from the wind, or given a T-shape so that one mouth or the other can be closed according to the weather. One man built a dome-shaped roof over his entrance, forming a kind of storehouse; but this was very unusual, most natives merely broadening the passage in one place to answer the same purpose. Generally the house is built to face the south so that the window will catch the light of the sun; the passage will then also run towards the south. But the rule is not invariable, since the builder has to modify his plans in accordance with the depth of snow.

A small hut was built for me when I paid my first visit to these Eskimos. It was oval in plan, 10 feet long, 6 feet 9 inches wide, and 4 feet 6 inches high. The blocks were of different sizes, the bottom ones, as usual, much larger than those above. They varied greatly in shape, too, leaving many ill-fitting open corners which were blocked with snow. Soft drift-snow was piled round the bottom of the outside to keep out the draught. The door was a small arch cut in two bottom blocks 2 feet high and 1 foot 10 inches wide. There was no window, but the snow was semi-translucent and gave sufficient light for

most purposes during the day. The passage was very short and slightly curved. It was unroofed save for one block over the door, but the next day when a strong wind arose and the snow began to drift my native donned his working clothes and in about five minutes covered it over and slightly extended the mouth so that it pointed away from the wind. The door itself was a snow-block shaped to fit the doorway. It was therefore longer than it was broad and so could be pushed inside; for at night before going to bed the door is always closed from the inside. There was a groove cut in the middle of its inner face so that it could be lifted more readily. Often when the weather is mild the natives merely cover the doorway with a skin or bag, or throw their coats down in the entrance, provided that the dogs are not so starved that they will tear the skins to pieces during the night."

"Hitherto only the simplest form of houses has been described; but there are many varieties, from the single isolated hut to the group of three or four that open on a common dance-house. No rule governs the Eskimos in these matters; they build their huts together or separate as fancy dictates. In view, however, of certain theories that have been put forward on the subject, notably by M. Mauss (1), it may be well to examine the different types of houses that we observed among the Copper Eskimos, without attempting in this place to compare them with the dwellings of Eskimos elsewhere.

Fig. 13 is the plan of a house built by an Eskimo of Dolphin and Union strait at the Liston and Sutton islands in the fall of 1914. It was 10 feet 10 inches long and 9 feet 6 inches wide, with a maximum height of 6 feet 3 inches. The platform was raised 2 feet above the level of the floor and had a maximum length of 6 feet from front to back. The door was 1 foot 11 inches high by 1 foot 9 inches wide, while the window, which was 2 feet 3 inches above it, was 2 feet 3 inches high by 2 feet 1 inch broad. The passage was straight, 13 feet 3 inches long, with a slight variation in width at different places but

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"1. L'Année Sociologique, 1906: Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés eskimos. 9me Année, 1906."

averaging about 2 feet 6 inches. The inmates of the hut were Ayallik, a man of about fifty years, his wife Kaumak , a motherly old dame of nearly the same age, their son Ivahluk, a boy about eight years old, another son Taptuna, of about thirteen years, and Anauyuk, a widower, Ayallik's nephew, himself probably forty-five years old. Their sleeping places on the platform, as well as my own during the few days I lived with this family, are given in the figure, and the outlines of the lamp [66] and table, showing their positions, are marked in front of the platform. (1) The hut was a single-roomed dwelling of the ordinary type, built at the end of a day's journey across the strait at the opening of the sealing season."

"1. Eskimos sleep with their heads towards the door, though occasionally when the hut is crowded one or more of them will lie in the opposite direction, as the feet naturally take up less room than the shoulders. Cf. Hall, p. 258."

1: Jenness--65-66
116, 342, 345

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

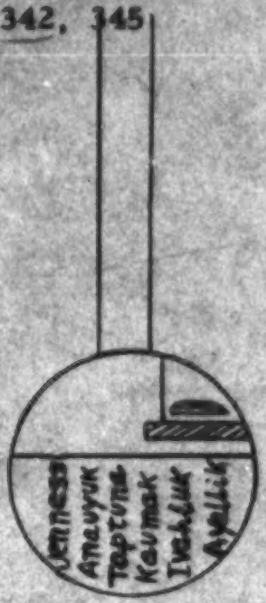

FIG. 13. A typical single-roomed snow hut.

FIG. 14. A single snow hut with a dance-house in front.

1: Jenness--66
116, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

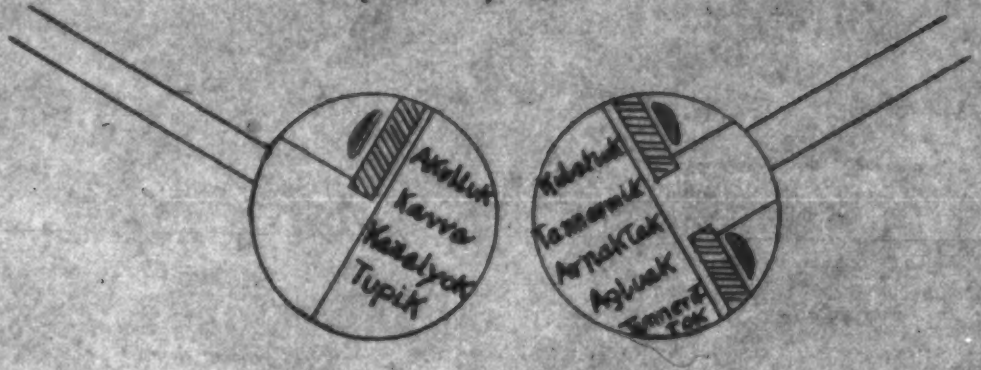

FIG. 15. Two houses erected side by side, but opening in different directions.

1: Jenness--66 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 345

"A development from this type of house is one which has a dance-house in front, built just over the doorway. Fig. 14 illustrates a dwelling of this kind which was seen at an Eskimo settlement in the Duke of York archipelago, Coronation gulf, in February, 1915. The hut belonged to a famous shaman named Uloksak, who at this time possessed two wives; each wife kept to her own side of the hut, where she had her own cooking and drying outfit."

"Sometimes two huts are almost joined together, but their passages open out in opposite directions. This is usually due to the condition of the snow, and so is more frequent in the fall of the year when its depth is not very great. Fig. 15 gives the plan of two such huts, erected on the southwest coast of Victoria island in December, 1914, by two men, Kanaiyok and Arnaktak, for their families. Their proximity in this case was due to the limited number of places behind the [67] sandspit where the snow was deep enough to build a house, and the passages were made separate to keep the dogs of the two families from fighting with one another. Kanaiyok's family consisted, besides himself, of his wife Akulluk, their baby daughter Kavva, and his father Tupik. With Arnaktak were his wife Kulahuk and her little son Tannaumik, and two single men, brothers, not closely connected with the family, named Tunnerittok and Agluak; in the previous settlement which the Eskimos had just abandoned these two men had lived in a hut of their own (see Fig. 21).

Sometimes, as in Fig. 16, two houses comparatively far apart have their passages joined near the entrance. This is convenient in stormy weather, when the snow drifts into the passageways and requires constant shovelling. One of these huts was inhabited by a man named Haviuyak, his wife Pikhugyuk, and their unmarried son Avalittok; in the other dwelt Kuniluk, his wife Kormiak and their three boys, Niptanatsiak, Taipanna and Kulitana, the last a baby about twelve months old.

When I joined the settlement of Puivlik Eskimos on the coast of southwest Victoria island in November, 1914, I went to live in a double hut similar to that represented in Fig. 19, one side of which was inhabited by a man named Haviuyak and his wife Itokanna, the other by Haviuyak's father Haviron and his two younger brothers, Utuallu, a youth of about sixteen years and Haugak, a boy of perhaps eight (see Fig. 22). About a week later an Eskimo named Aksiatak brought his family across the straits and joined the settlement, partly for the sake of company, but mainly because he was short of food and the Puivlirmuit had an abundance of caribou meat and fish. He then built a separate hut on the outskirts of their settlement; but three weeks later, when the whole band migrated some four miles along the coast, he arranged with Haviuyak that they should build their huts together side by side, each with a short passage of its own where the dogs of the two households could sleep apart. This was [68] done in the manner shown in Fig. 17: Haviuyak, with the help of his brother Utuallu, built a large single-roomed hut, while Aksiatak set up a smaller one beside it. Nakitok, the person who is marked as sleeping between Aksiatak and his wife Nik, was their only son, at this time about six years old.

In this last example the huts were still so separate that they might almost be regarded as independent of one another; but in the case of two that lay alongside of the hut represented in Fig. 13 there could be no possible doubt but that they were built in collaboration. They were inhabited by Ayallik's kinsmen, Kallun and Kaminggok.

Kallun's wife was Imilguna, a woman remarkable from the freckles that covered her face, and they had one young daughter Kungaiyuna. Algik, Kallun's brother, a young man of perhaps eighteen years, lived with them as one of the family. Kaminggok was a shaman whose wife Kalyutarun had given him two children, a little girl named Akana, and a baby boy Okomik. The latter had some disease which kept it from growing, so in the winter of 1915-16, when the Eskimos were very short of food, the mother killed it. It was then about three years old, but could neither talk nor walk, having been bewitched, its mother believed, by some evil spirit. Akana, the other child, was about seven years old, and eager to play at house-keeping, so she set up a hollow pebble on one side of the hut to serve as a lamp. Her mother used to give her the wick and blubber, and the child tended the lamp herself. These two houses were so close together that a conversation carried on in normal tones in one could be plainly heard by the people in the other (Fig. 18).

A further stage in complexity is reached when the houses actually combine, forming a single two-roomed dwelling. Such was the house of Aksiatak and his kinsman Hitkok at Nulahugyuk creek four miles east of Bernard harbour, in November, 1914, before they crossed the strait to join the Puivlirmiut on the other side. Hitkok's household consisted of himself, his widowed sister Iguak and his nephew Hogaluk, a boy of about fourteen years. The rooms were [69] built as contiguous circles, a small arc of each

being left uncovered to form a common forecourt and afterwards roofed over with a dome as in Byzantine architecture. The dance-house, which is usually built over a two-roomed house, is made in exactly the same way, only the dome is much larger, and the roof in consequence higher, so that the builders have to stand on bags to finish it. In Aksiatak's double house an ice window was let into the side of the dome so that it lit up both the forecourt and Aksiatak's room; a similar window was set in the front of Hitkok's room. At the bottom of the forecourt wall, immediately below the window, was the low arched doorway, cut in one of the snow-blocks with a single sweep of the knife. One entered on hands and knees; so narrow in fact was the doorway that a person rather bigger than the average had some difficulty in squeezing through. Half-way along its length the passage broadened, and here was kept the snowshovel, as well as one or two other things which could not conveniently be brought into the house, and would not be damaged by the dogs. The passage then made a sharp curve before issuing out into the open air, so that its mouth, being directed northward, would drift up less easily under the prevailing east and west winds. One day, however, a north wind arose, and Aksiatak had to extend his passage so that it opened towards another point of the compass, a task he performed in a very few minutes. Various sticks, harpoons, etc., were planted upright in the walls around the outside of the house, and bales of clothing were laid on top of the outer rampart.

The dimensions of the two rooms were as follows: --

	Aksiatak's room.	Hitkok's room.
Length (max.)	10' 5"	11'
Breadth (max.)	6' 9"	8' 11"
Height (max.)	5' 11"	6' 8"
Height of platform	1' 3"	1' 4"
Length of platform	6'	6' 2" [70]

The door, which was common to the two rooms, was 2 feet 1 inch high by 1 foot 8 inches wide. The window in the forecourt was 2 feet 2 inches high by 1 foot 9 inches wide, and the one in Hitkok's house had approximately the same dimensions. The front wall of the forecourt was about 2 feet in advance of those of the two rooms, but the height was the same as in Hitkok's room.

The passage had the following dimensions: --

Length 17' (2' were added to it later, at right angles to the mouth to keep out the drifting snow)
Breadth (average) 2' 6"
Breadth (maximum) 5' 8"
Height (average) 3'
Height (maximum) 4' 11"
The outside entrance was 3' 4" high and 2' 1" wide.

On November 22, when the temperature outdoors was -2° F. and the lamp in Hitkok's room was burning along only half its length, i. e. about 15", the temperature inside that room was 35° F. at a distance of three feet from the lamp and 30° F. against the back wall."

1: Jenness--67-68
116, 342

(1913-1916) 1922

Copper Eskimo

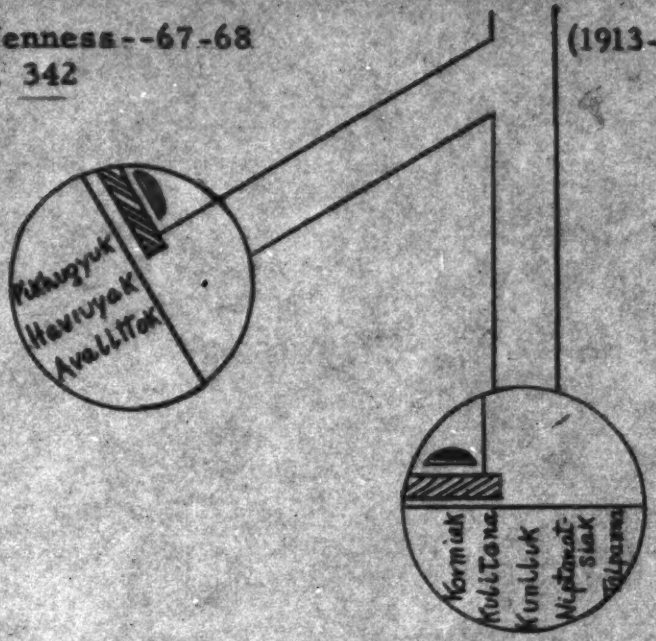

FIG. 16. Two houses erected some distance apart, but joined at their entrances.

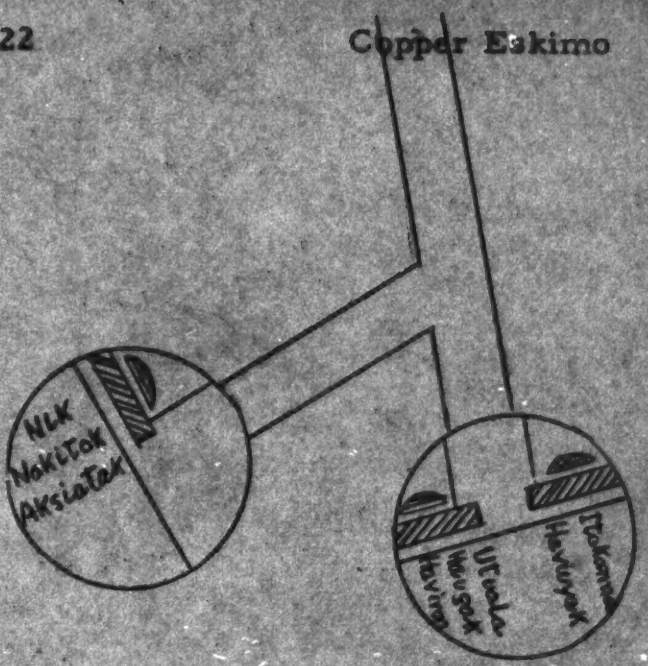

FIG. 17. Two houses with joined passages, one of which was evidently built before the other.

1: Jenness--69
116, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

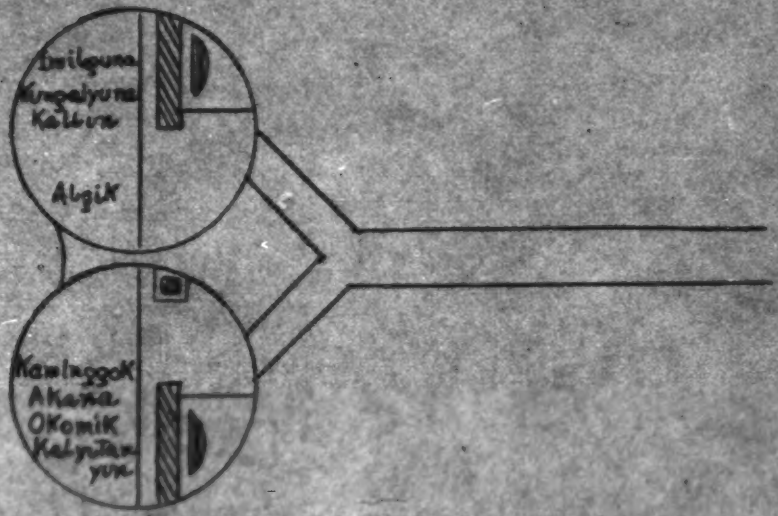

FIG. 18. Two houses built in collaboration, with a single passage for both

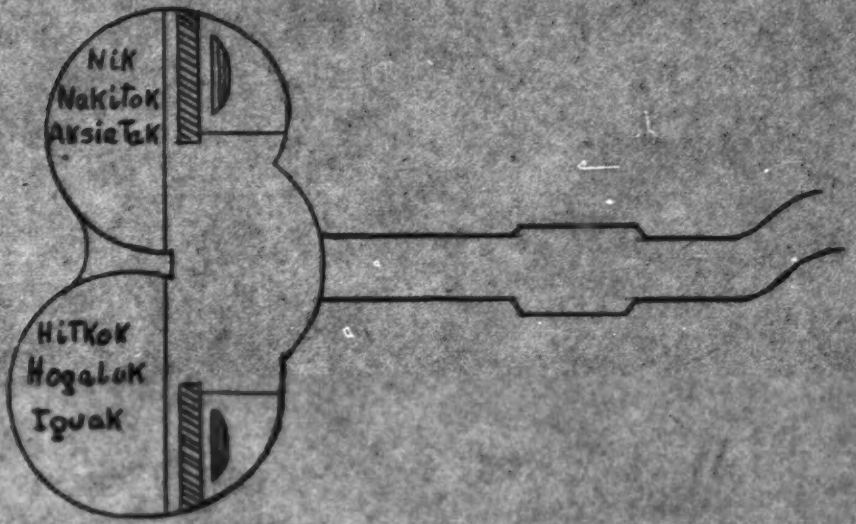

FIG. 19. A two-roomed dwelling, each room opening into the other, with a door-way common to both.

1: Jenness--70-71 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 345

"In the two-roomed hut just described the rooms were parallel with one another. This, however, is not always the case. Fig. 20 gives the plan of a hut in which they are arranged at right angles. It was built in the beginning of January, 1915, to shelter the families of Ikpakhuak and his nephew Huputaun. It would have been exactly the same as the hut represented in Fig. 19, but for the angle at which the two rooms lay with regard to one another. A few [71] days after its construction the front walls of the two rooms were torn down and a large cupola erected over them to form a dance-house for the community. Where the wall of the dance-house joined his room Ikpakhuak made a bed of willow-matting covered with an old sealskin for one of his dogs that had a litter of pups. His family consisted of his wife Higilak, his nephew and adopted son Haugak, (the son of Haviron in Fig. 17), Higilak's daughter (by a former husband) Kanneyuk, who was about twelve years of age, and myself, since this was the family into which I was formally adopted. The other household comprised Huputaun, his wife Uvillok, their baby boy Kotsik, and a little girl Holoak, of about ten years. Apart from the hut itself the passage was interesting because it had a T-shaped entrance, roofed over so that one side or the other could be closed according to the direction of the wind.

So far we have seen two huts coalescing into a single two-roomed dwelling with a dance-house over the forecourt, but nothing in the snow itself prevents three or four huts from coalescing in the same way. The only difficulty lies in the fact that the more

numerous the huts that have to be joined together the larger must be the forecourt or dance-house that connects them, and the more difficult it is to construct when the only material that can be employed is snow. Consequently, while the usual custom is to build the dance-house over a two-roomed hut, one built over three rooms is not at all rare, but one over four is very unusual. Still, all these types are found, since the Eskimos are not bound by any rules in the matter and suit their own convenience."

1: Jenness--71
342, 116, 345

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

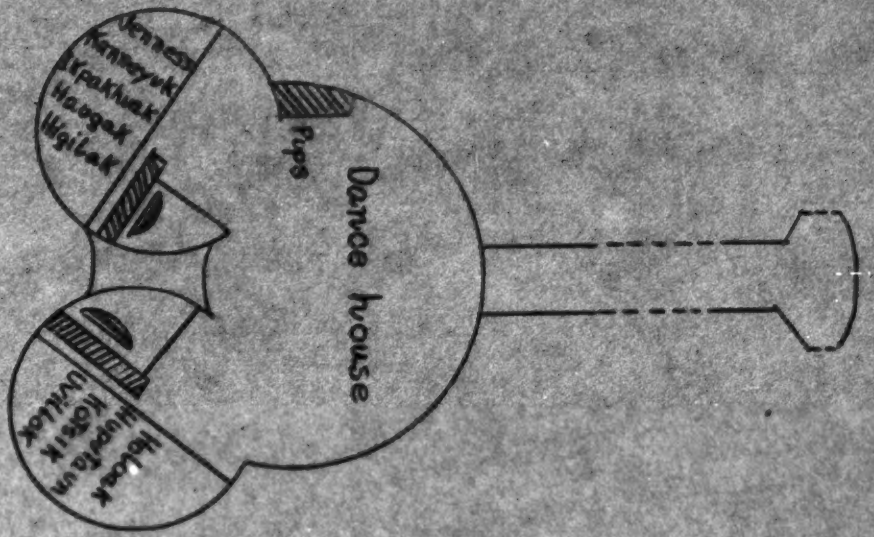

FIG. 20. A two-roomed dwelling opening on a dance-house

"Fig. 21 represents a group of three huts where the passages all unite to make a common entrance. They were built in March, 1915, about fifteen miles west of the Liston and Sutton islands, whither the Eskimos had migrated for the sealing [72] in the longer days of spring. Each hut was inhabited by a separate family. In the first was Ikpakhuak's, which was the same as in Fig. 10, save that a young girl, Arnauyuk or Kila, about fourteen years old, had joined it for a short time before her marriage; in the next hut lived Atigihyuk and his wife Kaiyoranna with their little girl Uvillok; and in the third Hitkok and his kinsfolk. The passage of this third hut had a small recess on one side half way along its length, for the same purpose as the widening in the passage represented in Fig. 19.

Sometimes two of the three houses coalesce into a single two-roomed dwelling, while the third remains separate, though its passage joins up with the other. This type I observed at the last settlement of the Puivlik Eskimos before they migrated to the coast in December, 1914. The two-roomed hut was the dwelling of Haviuyak and his family (see Fig. 17), while the single hut linked up with it was the home of the two brothers Tunnerittok and Agluak who later went to live with Arnaktak's family (see Fig. 15)."

1: Jenness--72
116, 342

(1913-16)

1922

Copper Eskimo

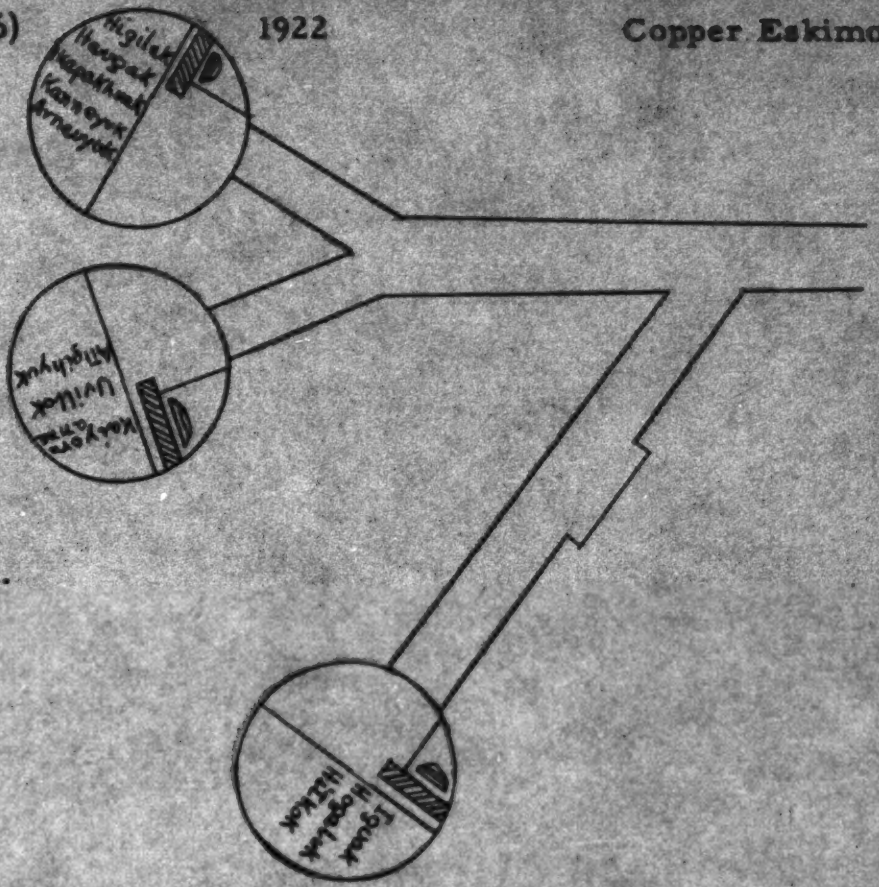

FIG. 21. Three single-roomed dwellings with joined passages.

1: Jenness--72-73 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116 342, 345

"In November, 1915, a three-roomed dwelling was built at Bernard harbour with a dance-house over the common fore-court. Two of the rooms contained two families each, while the third had only one. Each family had its separate lamp, and the different members slept in the usual places; thus the wife slept [73] in the corner where she could superintend the lamp and the cooking, and between her and her husband was their little child, whenever there was one. The family that lived by itself left the settlement before the rest, so the others closed up the front of the empty room with snow-blocks to make their house smaller and warmer (Fig. 23).

A curious four-roomed dwelling and dance-house was seen at the Liston and Sutton islands in December, 1915. I was not present when it was made and therefore cannot say whether the different rooms were erected at the same time or not. Architecturally two of the rooms must be regarded as excrescences, their only connection with the rest being that their doorways led into the dance-house instead of into a corridor. The dance-house formed the forecourt of the other two rooms, one of which was inhabited by two families not very closely related. Each family, as usual, had its own lamp and furniture, and the places in which the various inmates slept followed the usual custom. The winter that year was very stormy, and both food and blubber were scarce, so that the lamps had to be extinguished in many houses. The two rooms at the back of the dance-house were soon abandoned, as they were cold and uncomfortable unless the lamps were burn-

ing full. The other two families were better off as they could bar their doors and make their rooms airtight; they therefore remained where they were till February, when the whole settlement migrated some ten miles farther west (Fig. 24)."

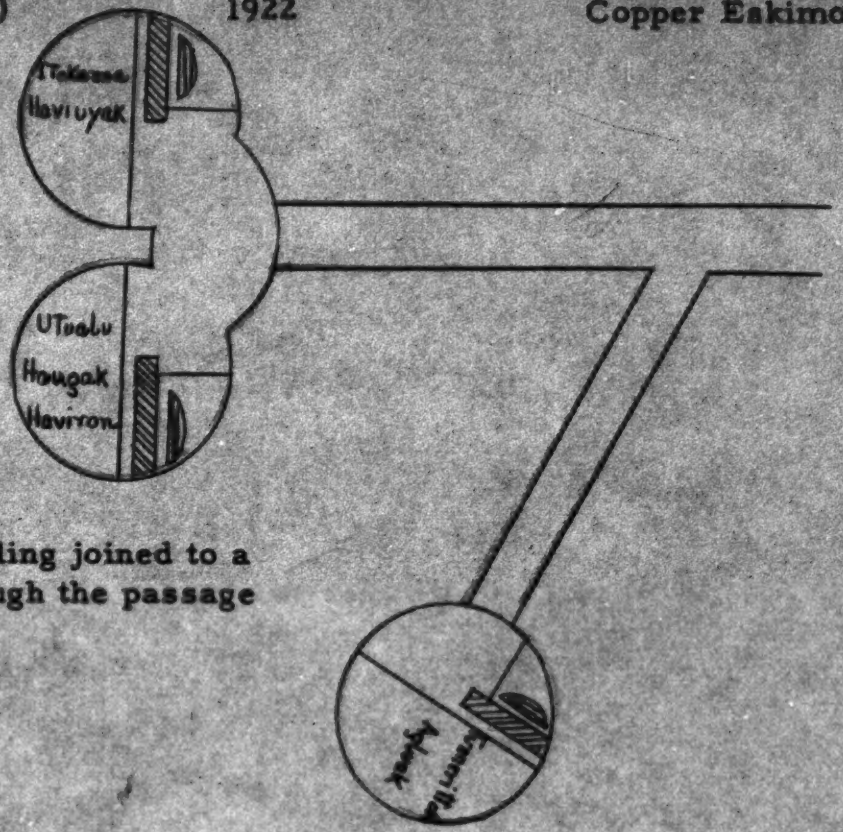

FIG. 22. A two-roomed dwelling joined to a single-roomed hut through the passage

1: Jenness--74
116, 345, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

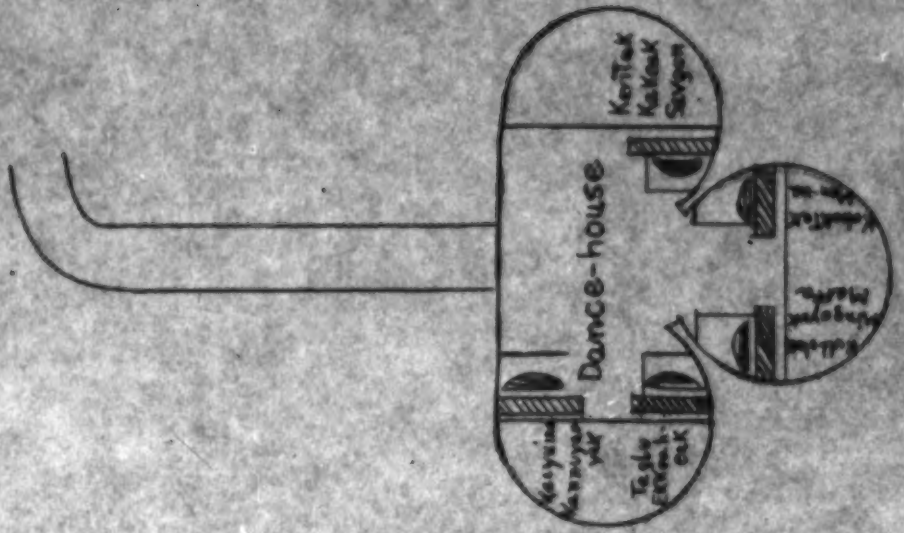

Fig. 23. A three-roomed dwelling with a dance-house

"All the snow-huts among the Copper Eskimos were of one or other of these types. The particular form adopted by any family depended on various considerations, the two most important being the amount of snow available and the size of the family. Less space was naturally required where there were no children and a medium-sized hut could conveniently serve two families; besides, with two lamps it could be kept more comfortable, especially when fuel was scarce. Again two families that had not seen each other for some time naturally like to be together, so they would make their rooms contiguous or join their passages. (1) The arrangements in one settlement were seldom followed in the next. As each family reached the camping-place the man would choose his site, and those who came up later would have to search round for themselves. Sometimes two would decide to build together before they started out, sometimes not until

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"1. Mr. Stefansson (Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 293) says, 'I was told that usually, but not always, double houses are built by those who are in the habit of exchanging wives.' It is true that they do sometimes build double or two-roomed houses in such cases, but just as often they live in separate huts, and a two-roomed house in itself raises no presumption of wife-exchange."

they chose their sites. It was rare for two families that lived together in one settlement to stay together in the next, apparently because they had tired of each other's company and were anxious for a change. When two families shared a single room, each as a rule kept to its own side of the hut, though there was never anything to mark a division between them. [75]

In February, 1916, I was travelling in Coronation gulf, and in my party were an Eskimo and his wife. They built a snow-hut for themselves each night while the rest of us slept in a tent. One night while we were camped on the ice a blizzard sprang up and raged all the next day. The dogs refused to face it in the morning, so we had to stay where we were until it abated. There was no wood of course on the ice, and we had very little kerosene for our primus lamp, so our tent was cold and uncomfortable. Two of the Eskimos therefore turned out and built an extension to the snow-hut, then broke down the intervening wall. This gave an oblong structure, rounded at the ends, with a long platform for the bed and a very narrow space for the floor in front. The woman kept a small blubber lamp burning in one corner, resting on a block of snow. Her place was right beside it, while the rest of us occupied the remainder of the platform. The original passage was left in place, but was slightly extended and its mouth curved away from the wind. The shape of this hut was therefore very unusual, but it was only a

make-shift to shelter us while the blizzard lasted. The Eskimos often enlarge a deserted hut in this way to provide a travelling party with accommodation for the night (Fig. 25)."

1: Jenness--75
116, 345, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

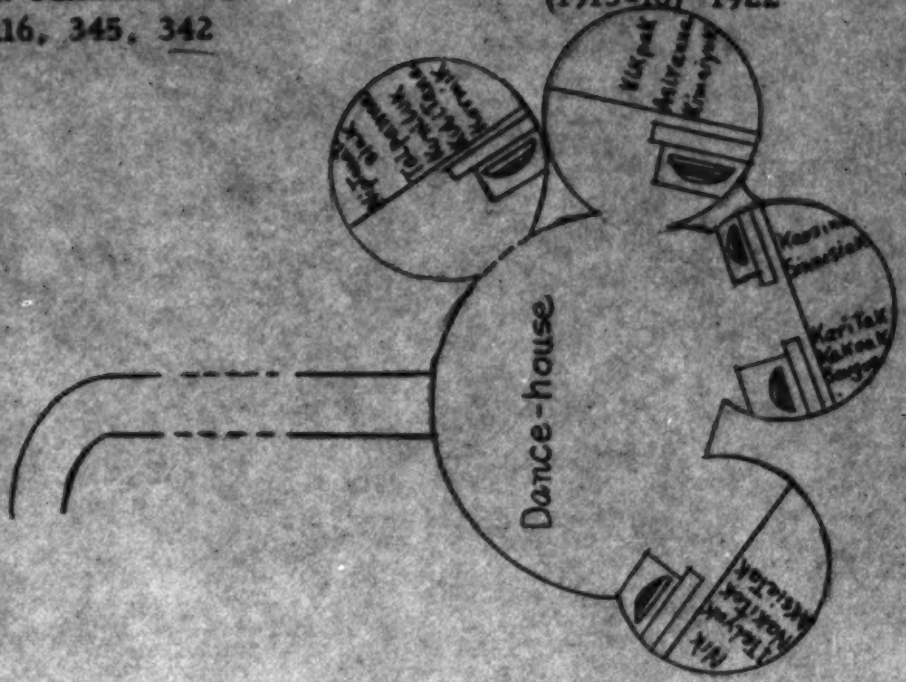

Fig. 24. A four-roomed dwelling with a dance-house

1: Jenness--76 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"In the fall of the year, when the natives return from inland to resume their winter life, the snow is not everywhere suitable for building a hut. Consequently they have recourse to their heavy spring tents, and only abandon them when they reach some convenient place in which to cache them until the spring. This occasionally leads to curious combinations. A large band of Eskimos settled in Bernard harbour in November, 1915. Some lived in tents with passages of snow, others in snow-huts of the usual types. In one case the passages of a snow-hut and a tent were joined together like the huts in Fig. 17, in another the tent and snow-hut were made to form a two-roomed dwelling, like the double snow-hut of Fig. 19."

1: Jenness--76-77 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 361

"These winter settlements sometimes spread over a considerable area, while at other times they are crowded together within a very narrow space. The determining factor is the amount of snow. A settlement in the Duke of York archipelago in February, 1915, covered an area of about 300 x 125 yards. There were 21 dwellings, only five of which were two-roomed; the rest were all single and isolated, for the snow was shallow in this vicinity. When half of the settlement migrated a week or two later to Bernard harbour they built their houses almost touching one another. In November, 1914, the Puivlik Eskimos had a settlement in Forsyth bay, and their houses were all two-roomed, or in pairs with common passages, arranged in a single line along the face of a low ridge. Their next settlement was made behind a sandspit about four miles along the coast. Here most of the houses again were two-roomed, or in pairs, but the line was very irregular and there was a single house standing about 100 yards away from the rest. Their third settlement was at Putulik, one of the Liston and Sutton islands. In this their houses followed roughly the line of the shore, and the single huts were in the minority. At the end of February they migrated to the westward, and were joined by other natives; but now they were living far out on the ice and had no shore to guide their planning, so their huts were scattered in all directions. Fully half of them were detached and single, while the rest were two-roomed or in pairs with common passages. In the middle of March they moved west again, at least all who had not before that time gone eastward and

joined the Eskimos of Coronation gulf. One man now set up a large skin tent, the rest building ordinary huts of snow; but since there was only one long drift which offered a sufficient depth of snow they built their houses side by side, some single, others in pairs with the passages [77] linked together; in one case three families joined their passages. Three latecomers had to build some distance away, though still along the same bank of snow; their huts were single, two of them facing south like all the rest, but the third opening northwards, because only in that direction could snow be found to build the passage."

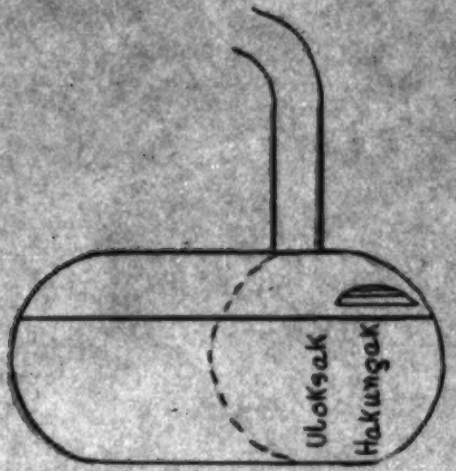

FIG. 25. An ordinary single hut enlarged to accommodate more inmates.

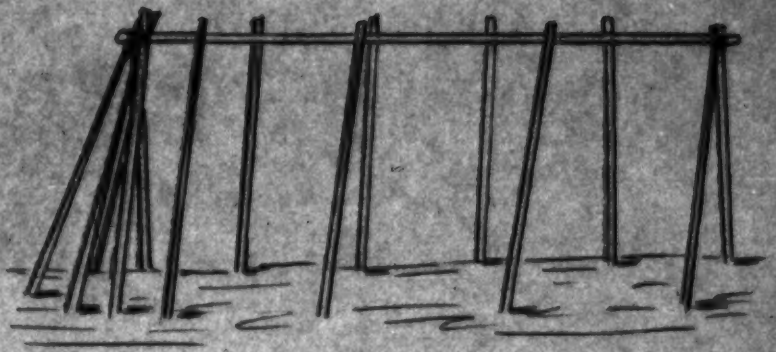

FIG. 26. The frame of a spring tent.

1: Jenness--77 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"It is clear therefore that M. Mauss' description of the typical snow hut is not applicable to this region. He says, 'Il est, d'ordinaire, multiple, composite; c'est-à-dire que deux ou trois iglous s'agglomèrent ensemble et viennent déboucher sur un même couloir; il est toujours excavé en terre; il est toujours muni d'un couloir dont le débouché est à demi souterrain; enfin, il contient, au minimum, deux bancs de neige avec deux places de lampes.' In the first place single houses are as common as two-roomed huts, or huts joined in their passages. The entrance is by no means always half-underground; often indeed it is on exactly the same level as the surrounding field of snow, though since the blocks of which it is built are generally cut out of its floor, it usually lies about a foot below that level. (1) Finally it is not true of these Eskimos that

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"1. The warmth of the house is materially increased by making the entrance of the outer passageway slightly higher. The Eskimos are fully aware of this; a native told me that his hut was cold because it was built on a sloping bank and the entrance to the passage was lower than the level of the house. It was early in the fall, and he could not remedy the defect, because nowhere else was the snow deep enough to build."

the hut contains at least two platforms and two lamps, though this may be the usual type in Hudson bay. (2)

"2. Cf. Boas, Bulletin A. M. N. H., Vol. XV, pt. I, p. 9 et seq. and Fig. 140."

1: Jenness--77-78 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"There are two courses open to the Eskimo in March, when the sun begins to climb higher in the sky and its warmth makes the snow-hut drip intolerably: he may either move at once into his spring tent, or he may build a snow-hut as before, but roof it over with skins instead of with a dome of snow. The latter is the simpler method, but makes an uncomfortable dwelling because the roof is apt to be low. Moreover at this season of the year the Eskimos are already preparing to leave the ice and take to the land for the spring and summer, when a tent is indispensable. Consequently most of them use their tents, though sometimes when these have been cached some distance away the other method must be resorted to for a few days. Hanbury mentions spring snow-huts roofed with skins in the neighborhood of Baker lake. (3) Occasionally they are constructed in the autumn also, when the snow is still too soft to cohere into a dome. We built a hut of this type in Victoria island on October 14, 1915, when travelling inland to pick up our summer caches. The walls settled somewhat in the night, and the roof sagged heavily through the weight of the falling snow, so that by morning there was

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"3. Hanbury, p. 75."

hardly a foot of space between the sleeping platform and the skins above. The hut was comfortable enough as long as we stayed in our sleeping bags, but when we tried to sit up and dress, the roof refused to budge a single inch, and our plight was really a most amusing one.

Each family chooses its own time for removing from a snow hut into a tent. The change nearly always occurs at the end of a day's migration, for at this season of the year no settlement lasts longer than two or three weeks. In [78] 1915 one man set up his tent at the end of February; but this was exceptionally early, and no one followed his example till the latter half of March. In the following year the winter was very severe and spring began rather late; no one dreamed of moving out of a snow-hut till the beginning of April. During the first week of that month there were three settlements within twenty miles of Bernard harbour. One, twelve miles east, consisted of five snow-huts and one tent. The second, between the two eastern islands of the Liston and Sutton group, had nine tents and only one snow-hut; the latter belonged to two little girls, who had induced some boys to build it for them that they might play at housekeeping. The third settlement was twenty miles west of the Liston and Sutton islands and consisted of snow-huts only, sixteen in number."

1: Jenness--78-79 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"The spring tent of a prosperous Eskimo is very heavy, both on account of its size and from the weight of the deerskins of which it is composed. Skins and poles together weigh upwards of seventy pounds, and occupy a good deal of space on the sled. The tent is as large as, often larger than, a good-sized snow-hut, that is to say it will measure perhaps 15 feet from front to back, with a maximum breadth of 11 feet and a height of about 7 feet. Ten or twelve poles support the ridge-pole, and short sticks, snow-beaters, walking-sticks, etc., poked in behind the poles keep the tent stretched taut. The four or five poles at the far end, which are lashed together at the end of the ridge-pole, give it a semi-circular back. While the man is fastening these together, his wife will lash two others to the front end of the ridge-pole, leaving a triangular opening. The other poles are then ranged along the sides, leaning against the ridge-pole without being lashed, and the tent is drawn all round the frame, encircling it on the back and sides and half closing up the front.

The woman now laces the tent along the ridge-pole and halfway down the front, while the husband anchors it securely around the bottom with stones or blocks of snow. If the weather is still cold, and the snow is suitable, a low snow wall is first erected and the tent poles planted on top. Then a foot or so outside it another low wall is made all round and the interspace filled with soft loose snow. Into this the edges of the tent are pegged, and more loose snow is stamped over it to keep out any draught. Finally, on top, are placed the bags of clothing and other articles that are not required inside the tent.

The front of the tent is now broad and gaping, but the sleeping platform must be arranged before it is closed up, the table and lamp and drying rack set up on snow-blocks, and the bedding and household utensils passed inside. After this is done a short passage of snow-blocks is built as in the case of an ordinary hut. Sometimes the passage is made before the goods are passed [79] inside, for there is still a gap between the end of the passage roof and the apex of the front wall of the tent. When everything is entered this gap is closed with a skin, which is tied or jammed in some way at the top and covered with snow at the bottom.

Such a tent is rectangular, but with rounded ends to give it more space. Sometimes, however, the front is finished off square, if the family is small and has little property to keep inside. The ridge-pole is often inclined so that the back of the tent is higher than the front. The gaping seam along the ridge can be stuffed with scraps of skin, odd mittens, hand-wipers of ptarmigan skins and anything else that lies to hand. The tent itself is generally made of caribou skins obtained in spring, the hair of which is long and loose and consequently unfit for clothing; about fifteen are required for a single tent. It is generally erected with the hair side out, as Mr. Stefansson says, but the rule is not invariable. Usually it takes about three days to sew a tent after the skins are scraped, but if the woman is very industrious, she may finish it in two. In the spring of 1915 a woman finished a tent in two days, while her mother-in-law was nearly a week in making

one but a little larger; the second woman, however, was sewing other things at the same time, besides doing most of the cooking for our party. Her tent was not as strong as she had hoped, for the spring skins soon rotted and began to tear in several places; so in the fall, when our hunting was very successful and we had plenty of serviceable skins, she put fifteen of them aside to make a new tent.

An hour is easily consumed in setting up one of these tents, with its outer wall and passage of snow. They are very comfortable, however, and rather more spacious than the ordinary snow-hut. The doorway is the same as in a snow-hut, an oval gap in the snow, on a level with the bottom tier of blocks or sometimes a little lower, the snow-blocks for the passage walls being taken out of the floor. In stormy weather a wind-break of snow is often built along one side of the tent. As a rule there is no need of a window, for the days are long in spring and the obscurity inside the tent is rather a relief from the dazzling glare outside; occasionally, however, the passage is slightly enlarged at the side of the door and a window if ice inserted in the side. On April 15th, 1915, a tent in which the flame of the lamp extended about 18 inches gave a temperature of 43° F. at the front of the sleeping-platform, though the thermometer outside stood at zero. In the late spring, and also in the fall, when the snow is shallow or melting, a patch of bare ground is chosen for the camping-site and the edges of the tent are held down with large stones; a passage is impossible in such cases."

1: Jenness--79-80 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"Another kind of tent is occasionally seen, a conical tent like the Indian tipi. Unlike the tipi, however, the skin covering reaches to the very top of the cone, for the blubber lamp, if properly trimmed, gives out hardly any smoke and a venthole is unnecessary. This tent, like the rectangular one, can be raised on snow-blocks and furnished with a passage; one that I saw in Coronation [80] gulf was about 18 feet high, while its diameter at the bottom was about 20 feet. Possibly this was the kind of tent that Hearne saw at the mouth of the Coppermine river, though his description is far from clear. It is much less common than the rectangular tent, yet the Copper Eskimos have used it for as long as they can remember. The conical tent described by Murdoch from Barrow, Alaska, and by Mr. Stefansson from the Mackenzie delta, differed from the Copper Eskimo type in that only four or five of the poles reached the apex of the cone, the remainder leaning against a hoop that passed over the principal poles some 6 feet from the ground. (1)

"1. Murdoch, p. 86; Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 26 et seq."

1: Jenness--79-80 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo-2
416, 342

The inland Eskimos of northern Alaska, and some of the Mackenzie natives, often use bee-hive tents of an altogether different shape; originally they were made of deerskin, but this has now been superseded by cloth. The frame is of pliant willow sticks, which are bent over in pairs and lashed together to form a series of arches. (2) The Copper Eskimos, however, are unacquainted with this style of tent, which is more akin to one used by the Indians."

"2. See the excellent photographs in E. de K. Leffingwell, The Canning River Region, Northern Alaska, Interior Department, U.S.G.S., Professional Paper 109, Plate VII., Washington 1919."

1: Jenness--80-81 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"The summer tent of the Copper Eskimos has the same shape as their rectangular spring tent, only it is much smaller and made of lighter skins. Often indeed, they use not deerskins but sealskins, from which the hair has been [81] removed, or sometimes both deerskins and sealskins combined; a family from Prince Albert sound had a tent even of musk-ox skins. Walking-sticks, ice-pick handles, and fish-spears serve for poles, with the addition of one or two light sticks that are generally carried along for this specific purpose. The doorway is more open than in the spring tent, since the ends are rarely long enough to meet in front without making the interior too restricted; even with the end partly open the occupants barely have room to stretch themselves out at night. Such a tent is comfortable and airy enough in fine weather, but it affords very poor shelter in a storm. The rain drips through the seam along the ridge, and the wind beats in through the open door while the poor Eskimo crouches shivering within. He can raise it up on walls of turf, or in the fall on snow-blocks, and block his door with a spare skin, but these are sorry makeshifts; so, before the rigour of the autumn overtakes him, he generally retraces his footsteps and recovers the heavy tent he used in spring."

1: Jenness--80-81
116, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

FIG. 27. A spring tent with an outer wall and passage of snow-blocks.

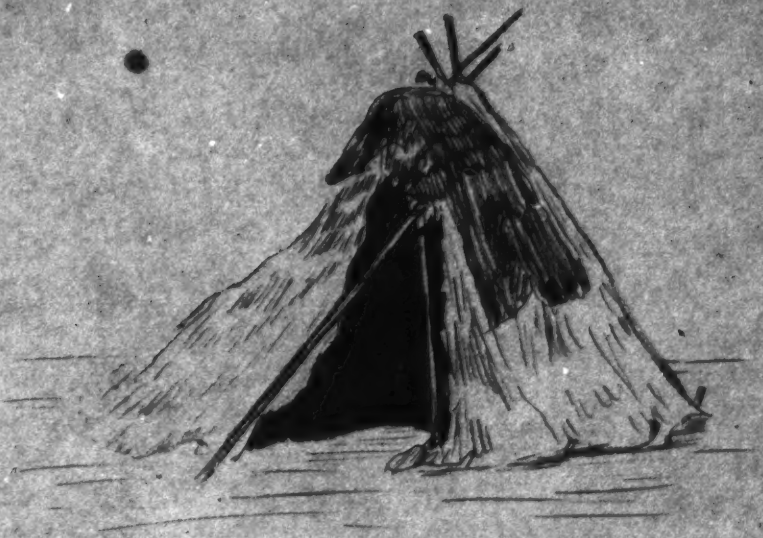

FIG. 28. A summer tent at the fishing lake behind Bernard harbour

[Redrawn after photos]

1: Jenness--81
116, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

"The interior arrangement of the summer tent differs in no way from the spring tent as above described. Often both in spring and summer two tents are joined together so as to have a common entrance, like the common passage of a two-roomed hut. They then lie, not in a straight line, but at an obtuse angle with one another so that the walls meet together on the side facing the common door. Just as in the snow-hut, more than one family sometimes sleep in a single tent; but, as every household has a tent of its own, this seldom occurs except when one is visiting another, or when a party wanders off on a hunting or fishing excursion for a few days, and leaves most of its property behind."

1: Jenness--81-82 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 172

"All over the country the Eskimos have left traces of their camping sites in the shape of rings of stones that have once held down their tents, with the hearth-stones lying a few feet to one side. Early explorers have often noticed [82] these in other regions. (1) There are remains of caches too, heaps of stones that have covered meat or blubber or clothing to protect them from the wolverines and foxes. Near Bernard harbour there were many remains of all these kinds. Some of the rings were very small and may simply have been weights to hold down drying deerskins; others were plainly tent-rings, for there were hearth-stones close beside them. Often not far away were large overturned boulders to which the natives had fastened their dogs. The plans and dimensions of some of those rings are given in Fig. 29."

"1. Cf. McClintock, p. 168, et passim; Parry, Vol. I, p. 70f."

2: Stefansson--62 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"The snow dwelling houses of the Mackenzie Eskimo proper were used only on journeys and under special circumstances. Among the Baillie Islands or most easterly branch of the Mackenzie people, snowhouses were frequently lived in all winter although wood and earth houses were also used. Among the Copper Eskimo no other form than the snowhouse is now in use nor was any other house in use in the past so far as the people themselves know. The Cape Bexley people were familiar with the wood and earth houses used on the section of coast west from them to Cape Lyon, but I infer that this familiarity came through the ruins of the houses only because they made about them some statements which are absurd in the light of our knowledge of the characteristics of the Eskimo house of the western type. They said that the people of this section of the country used to live in snowhouses in winter and in earth and wood houses in summer. The nature of an Eskimo house is that so soon as the sun begins to thaw the snow on its roof in the spring, the house begins to drip and must be vacated. This is true, I know, all the way from Point Hope east to Baillie Island and must be true wherever houses of the type are used. All summer the floor of one of these houses is a puddle of water and it is only next fall after the ground is thoroughly frozen that the dwellings become again habitable. It appears to me therefore an essential absurdity to suppose that the houses of which we saw the ruins west of Crocker River were used as summer dwellings.

The snowhouses of the Mackenzie people seem to have averaged considerably larger than the ones in use by the Copper Eskimo. It was common enough at Baillie Island that it was something like nine or ten feet from the floor to the top of the dome. In the east, however, houses of this size are erected only on special occasions when dances are to be held. One such house was built to celebrate our coming to the Akuliakattagmiut and was about nine feet in height and accommodated forty people standing up, with a circular space of about five feet in diameter left in the center free for the dancers.

The largest dwelling house we ever saw in actual use was among the Kanhiryuarmiut, where nine people slept under a single roof. At the time we were there they were using snow walls and a skin roof in that particular house, but we were told that the same family had occupied a snowhouse until a few days before. Five or six may generally be considered a large number for a single snowhouse and if there are only two or three inhabitants, the house is commonly no more than five by seven feet in the dimensions of its floor space and five and a half to six feet high from floor to the center of the dome."

2: Stefansson--64 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 356

"The house is now fit for occupancy and will be occupied as long as circumstances require. When the weather is cold out-of-doors, it is possible to keep the snowhouse very comfortably warm for the cold from the outside neutralized the heat from within and no melting takes place, but if the weather turns warm, melting soon starts. If the house has been perfectly built the dome is of such even curvature that no water drips down, but only trickles down the sides. If there is any unevenness, however, dripping will commence. This is temporarily dealt with by pressing a block of dry snow against the spot from which the water drips. This block will adhere to the roof without any danger of its dropping until it becomes thoroughly soaked before which it should be removed and be replaced by a dry block. Occasionally, however, one naturally forgets to do this and it is not uncommon to have a block of soaking wet snow drop on the bed upon your head or into any food that you are eating."

2: Stefansson--65
116, 342, 221

(1908-1912) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"When the warm weather of spring comes upon a snowhouse village that is already built, the roofs will cave in while the walls remain intact. A few sticks are then put up for support and skins spread over. Only caribou skins are used, although sealskins, bearskins, and musk-ox skins are commonly used in emergencies."

2: Stefansson--66 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 281

"The tents in use in summer from Cape Bexley to the Kent Peninsula as seen near Bear Lake the summer of 1910 may be described as A-tents with bell ends. Commonly the tent of last year is during the winter cut up and used for some purpose, perhaps it has been fed to the dogs, or possibly it has been used for bedding. The tents of all but the most provident families are therefore in spring very small and unsatisfactory but each time a caribou is killed its skin goes to increase the size of the tent and by the latter part of summer everyone is suitably housed. The skins are always used with the hair side out whether they be sealskins or caribou skins. I have never seen musk-ox or bearskins used in summer. They are useful only in the transition stage while the snow walls are still in use and while the people are still able to haul their belongings in sleds. In the summer, when everything has to be carried on one's back, none but light skins can be conveniently used."

2: Stefansson--71 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 725

"Another consideration in choosing a campsite [JMR: in summer] is that there shall be enough stones for camp purposes, to fasten down the tents, to form windbreaks, fireplaces, etc., to furnish suitable slabs and boulders on which to spread meat to dry, and perhaps most important of all, to give a background with which the color of the tents so harmonized as to make them difficult to perceive from a distance. The tents generally have a mottled appearance due to the use of whole caribou skins, the animals are much darker on some parts of the body than on others. This harmonizes well with the huge mossgrown boulders and stone slabs that cumber the hill tops about the sources of the Dease and along the Coppermine to McTavish Bay of Bear Lake. A dozen tents are often so artfully pitched that the men and dogs moving about them can be seen at a greater distance than the tents, while an Indian lodge or a white man's tent can usually be seen four times as far as could men standing around them. In August, 1910, our camp was for a few days located a quarter mile across a small lake from an Eskimo camp of some seven tents. Though this camp was on the skyline as seen from ours, we had the greatest difficulty in making it out without the use of glasses, so little did a tent on the skyline differ in shape and color from a boulder on the skyline. Looking from their camp to ours the small details of arrangement could easily be made out."

2: Stefansson--230 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
333, 342, 117

" Victoria Island. Snowhouses. Snowhouse building differs here somewhat from the Kittegaryuit who build in a regular spiral from the ground up and cut the snow usually outside the house. Here the snow is probed with a probe about four feet long to see if it is good quality down to the ice and the ice level. Blocks are then cut from the floor of the house first, and so as to have their transverse diameter vertical. The Kittegaryuit are particular about the size of the blocks having them about uniform. These cut blocks any shape and size, some like a "four square" timber and anything from a foot to four feet long, some squares, some triangles, etc. The wall is not started in a spiral, our north wall was well up when someone else started the south wall equally irregularly. When the roof part is in construction the blocks are more regular in shape and of more uniform quality. There was not enough snow in the floor for much more than half the house, a few blocks were spoiled for the snow was not good. The house was about circular and about eight feet to the dome, diameter about ten feet. Outside to a height of about three feet, a second wall is built outside the first, about eighteen inches from it, and soft snow thrown in between. An oval shaped hallway about four feet high was built southwest and just east of it a rectangular shaped door cut about three feet high and two feet wide, through which snow blocks were passed in. When house was finished this was walled up and a new door arch-shaped about two and a half feet high, cut in from entry. The sleeping platform is built of the pieces that break and of new

blocks passed in to front it, with loose snow shoveled over. In our case the platform is about eighteen inches, but I have seen it two and a half feet, in which case it consists of a horseshoe-shaped bench left or built around the wall and boards laid across."

2: Stefansson--233 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
342, 117

"Windows. Windows are not in use now, though all the abandoned houses we saw had them, both on shore and the two sea villages. Evidently they are to catch the faint light. Either ice was never used or else sledded away to new houses."

2: Stefansson--245 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
342, 117

"The houses are all high enough to stand upright in. The door faces the south. The woman sits on the edge of bed at side board, over edge of which is the lamp. To her right is the man's seat and to her right the guest or older visitors. Younger visitors stand. In one case two houses had a third, without door to the outside, between them. I was never invited into one of these houses, and none of us ever entered houses uninvited."

2: Stefansson--237
342, 117

(1908-12) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"Hanirkarrmiut Houses. Skin roofs and snow walls are used in the spring by the Haneragmiut. Have been in use since they came ashore here some eight or ten days ago. There is a ridge pole some three feet shorter than the long diameter of a slightly oval house, supported on X sticks and lashed to them. These sticks incline a little, in pairs, toward the center of the house. The rest of the rafters, of which the ice pick is always one, are either from the wall to the ridge pole, or from wall to the X sticks, whose end sometimes, and sometimes not, sticks out of a hole in the roof. There are generally three rafters from wall to X sticks, the middle being to the crotch. The tents are preferably of deerskin but only one here is wholly of deer. One has a gable of aklak and another is mostly of sealskins, dried, laid shingle fashion. The hair is turned in. In summer they use tents similar to the house roofs now in use. One man here has not enough skins yet, and still uses a snow roof, which is poor now, as the weather is no longer cold."

3: Rasmussen--192 [Footnote] (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

"When a snow hut is built so small that there is not the usual space for floor and platform, it is so arranged that the whole of the floor of the snow hut is made into a platform, but divided into two parts by a narrow passage so that one can go in and out of the hut without stepping on the platform. In such cases the occupants lie with their heads towards one another."

22: Richardson--349-350 (1848-49) 1851 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

[AW: Not limited to the Copper Eskimo] As the days lengthen, the villages are emptied of their inhabitants, who move seaward on the ice to the seal hunt. Then comes into use a marvellous system of architecture, unknown amopg the rest of the American nations. The fine, pure snow has by that time acquired, under the action of strong winds and hard frosts, sufficient coherence to form an admirable light building material, with which the Eskimo master-mason erects most comfortable dome-shaped houses. A circle is first traced on the smooth surface of the snow, and the slabs for raising the walls are cut from within, so as to clear a space down to the ice, which is to form the floor of the dwelling, and whose evenness was previoulsy ascertained by probing. The slabs requisite to complete the dome, after the interior of the circle is exhausted, are cut from some neighbouring spot. Each slab is neatly fitted to its place by running a flenching-knife along the joint, when it instantly freezes to the wall, the cold atmosphere forming a most excellent cement. Crevices are plugged up, and seams accurately closed by throwing a few shovelfuls of loose snow over the fabric. Two men generally work together in raising [350] a house, and the one who is stationed within cuts a low door, and creeps out when his task is over. The walls, being only three or four inches thick, are sufficiently translucent to admit a very agreeable light, which serves for ordinary domestic purposes; but if more be required a window is cut, and the aperture fitted with a piece of transparent ice. The proper thickness of the walls is of some importance. A few inches excludes the wind, yet keeps down the temperature so as to prevent dripping from the interior."

22: Richardson--350 (2) (1848-49) 1851 Copper Eskimo
116, 342

[AW: Not limited to the Copper Eskimo] "By means of antechambers and porches in form of long, low galleries, with their openings turned to leeward, warmth is insured in the interior; [AW: of the igloo] and social intercourse is promoted by building doors of communication between them, or by erecting covered passages. Storehouses, kitchens, and other accessory buildings, may be constructed in the same manner, and a degree of convenience gained which would be attempted in vain with a less plastic material. These houses are durable, the wind has little effect on them, and they resist the thaw until the sun acquires very considerable power."

11: Stefansson--274-275 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 172, 342

"I was about to pass it within something like twenty yards when I became convinced that it was no single rock, but a pile made by man. I accordingly went up and examined it. The men then admitted that it was a house, but they said it had not been built by human beings and it would be a bad thing to have anything to do with it.... All the information I could get from them about it was that it had been built by the spirits before the human race inhabited the land. I happened to be familiar with the fact that in Baffin Land and elsewhere in the east there were stone dwellings said to have been built by a race of men who were named with a name that differs but slightly from the name for spirit. The name given me here was identical for that used locally for the familiar spirits of the shamans, and on specific inquiry they told me that the spirits who built these houses were identical in kind with those employed by the shamans.

When I asked what the house was like inside, they said first that no man who has any sense ever goes inside; but later on they told me that sometimes foolish children in the absence of their parents would [275] enter such houses in play.... The door, they said, was in the same position that an Eskimo house door ordinarily is. In other words, it was two and a half or three feet high, on the ground level, and just big enough for a man to crawl through it on all fours. The house was dome-shaped inside as well as outside and there were no rafters. They specifically denied that sods, sticks, or anything else but stones appeared in the walls....On the beach here there are any number of flat and

angular pieces of rock, and of these exclusively the house had been built. One could not tell very well about its dimensions because of the mass of snow covering it, but it seemed to be not over seven feet high, and very probably had an oval floor with transverse diameters no greater than five by seven feet."

21: Hearne--274-275 (1771) 1797 Copper Eskimo
342

"Their tents are made of parchment deer skins in the hair, and are pitched in a circular form. In winter, however, they have huts half underground, rising and pointed like a cone: these are always erected in the most sheltered situations."

12: Collinson--172 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 356, 177

"On our route we found the natives encamped near our first anchorage. The snow houses have certainly a very clean and comfortable appearance when first built, but they soon get abominably filthy. During the following day they were joined by another portion of the tribe whom we had not yet seen, and among these men we found a small axe and part of a pemmican tin, which showed they were the party who had met with the Investigator's people in the spring."

12: Collinson--221-222 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo-1-2

116, 437, 221, 225, 342

"The carpenter having made an outline sketch of a human skeleton, it was placed on the grave of our deceased shipmate, in hopes that it would deter the natives from disturbing his remains. They paid us a last visit on the 3rd, and we parted very good friends. We would have been better pleased could they have abstained from stealing. There is, however, great excuse for them; such riches they had never seen before: pieces of iron hoop, empty preserved meat tins, old clothes, &c., were still eagerly sought for. In considera-[222] tion of the many bows and arrows that had been purchased from them, I presented them as a last gift with one of the small spars we had obtained at Sitka, which would nearly supply the whole tribe. It is very difficult to say where they wintered, but I do not think they went further than the inlet Mr. Jago explored. Leaving us as they did on the 9th of November, and the sun disappearing on the 18th, there was but little daylight left. That they went round Point Wollaston is, I think, almost proved to a certainty by the cylinder deposited by Mr. Skead having been removed; and that they had been in communication with the party met by Lieut. Jago is also, I conceive, evident by the fact of his seeing Hongkong beads in their possession. My belief is that they wintered on the islands to the north side of that inlet he explored, where tide and wind would occasion cracks throughout nearly the whole winter, and whence they obtain seals. Several skins full of blubber were on their sleighs when they first returned, of which Mr. Phayre purchased five, making us rather more than 60 gallons of oil. Fuel they are totally independent of, and a snow-drift affords them material

for a winter habitation, the most elaborate of which would not occupy the family more than a day in erection. While with us they were constantly on the move, the tent seldom remaining two days in the same position, unless for lake fishing."

[P. 1]

MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE COPPER ESKIMO

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, when the Canadian Arctic Expedition established its headquarters at Bernard Harbour in Dolphin and Union Strait, on the western fringe of Copper Eskimo territory, the natives preserved their old culture, virtually unimpaired, despite contact with several explorers in the middle of the nineteenth century, and with others during the early years of the twentieth. The only visible change caused by these contacts was the introduction of a considerable quantity of iron, which the Eskimo hammered cold, as they hammered their native copper, and had already substituted for copper in knives, adzes, harpoon-heads, and needles. From lack of ammunition the only men who possessed rifles, five in number, had fallen back on the bow and arrow, which was still the universal weapon of the chase. Of the arrows not tipped with bone about two-thirds bore tips of hammered copper and only one-third tips of iron; the ice chisel and other tools retained their copper blades and points; and the soapstone pot for cooking meat held undisputed sway in every household. All clothing was of skin or fur, mainly from the caribou and the seal; and in cut and adornment it followed without change the styles set by earlier generations. The blubber of the seal, burned in a soapstone lamp, provided the only artificial light, and throughout the winter months all the energies of the Eskimo were concentrated on the pursuit of seals at their breathing holes in the sea ice.

Ten years later the situation had undergone a profound change. Native copper had become practically valueless and served for rivets only. Bows and arrows had disappeared, because every native was now armed with a high-powered rifle. Other weapons and tools had steel or iron blades, metal cooking pots had ousted the soapstone vessels, and primus lamps and kerosene lanterns were spreading from home to home. Fur clothing was tending to follow western Eskimo patterns, and to be overlaid with bead-work, or with imported garments of cotton or wool. Dissatisfied with the old-fashioned snow-hut and skin-covered kayak, one native had even erected a plank cabin heated by an iron stove, and purchased a motor-boat to transport his household goods along the coast during the brief summer months. The tentacles of the fur trade had firmly gripped the region, and the trapping of foxes, animals of no economic importance in earlier times, now rivalled in importance the hunting of seals and caribou.

Fortunately, before this revolution occurred, the Canadian Arctic Expedition had brought out a large collection of Copper Eskimo specimens, nearly all of which are now stored in the National Museum at Ottawa. These specimens, and

412 322 Two incidents that came directly under my notice in the summer of 1915 were fairly typical. A native with whom I was travelling in southwest Victoria Island discovered on the beach a long, nail-studded plank that had presumably fallen overboard from some vessel. He carried it several miles inland to our camp, and there spent half a day splitting it into poles for fish-spear handles, two of which he sold to a kinsman. A few days later another native found a second plank, which he proposed to convert into a sled-runner, and with this purpose in view trimmed it slightly with his hunting knife. After consulting his companions, however, he decided that a new sled-runner was not needed, so he turned the [239] plank over to his stepfather to fashion into tent-poles. In each case the native split the plank with a crude antler wedge driven home by a boulder.

322 The uses of wood were naturally manifold. From it were made the sled, [372] the tent-poles, the frame of the kayak, the snow shovel, the table, food trays, and other articles too numerous to mention. Odd chips of wood sometimes 824 served as fuel during the summer months, although the Eskimo preferred 513 heather or willow twigs. Willow twigs had a special use; sewn together in a long strip they provided a mattress to protect the bedskins from the snow.

STONE

333 Stone (apart from native copper) played an astonishingly small rôle in the [342] economy of the Copper Eskimo. Their winter home was invariably the snow-hut, although their predecessors in the region had dwelt in huts of snow or wood, whose ruins could still be traced in numerous places along the coast. Loose stone boulders held down the edges of the Copper Eskimo tents; pillars of stone (in many cases flat slabs of dolomite easily piled one on top of another) supported kayaks, sleds, and other goods that were temporarily abandoned during the summer months; and heaped-up boulders protected caches of meat or clothes from the ravages of foxes, wolves, and birds; but any real construc-
324 tion in stone was conspicuously lacking. There were no stone knives or adzes,
412 no arrow heads tipped with stone, no stone sinkers for fishing lines or nets, and no stone scrapers for use on wood or hides, although implements of all these types had been used by the earlier inhabitants and were sometimes gathered as curiosities by the Copper Eskimo themselves. There were stone hammers and whetstones, it is true, but these were merely unshaped pebbles picked up when [415] the need arose and afterwards discarded. In short, stone provided the material [354] for two objects only, the lamp and the cooking pot; and the stone cooking pot [177] was discarded soon after our visit in favour of iron vessels brought in from the outside.

135

Figure 1. Lamp of native copper. IV.D.1441. 1/1.

324 These two vessels, the lamp and the cooking pot, were invariably made from
415 soapstone (talc chlorite schist), originally with copper-bladed adzes, but in our
354 time with adzes of iron. Freshly quarried soapstone readily scratches with the
316
[135]

SNOW KNIVES OF ANTLER AND BONE

412 32 [192] To chop up the blocks of snow in the cooking pot, women frequently used a knife of antler, more rarely of bone, known as *kawayaq*, a light, roughly made tool, two specimens of which are shown in Figure 78. Many women, however, simply used the curved knife or *ulo* for this purpose.

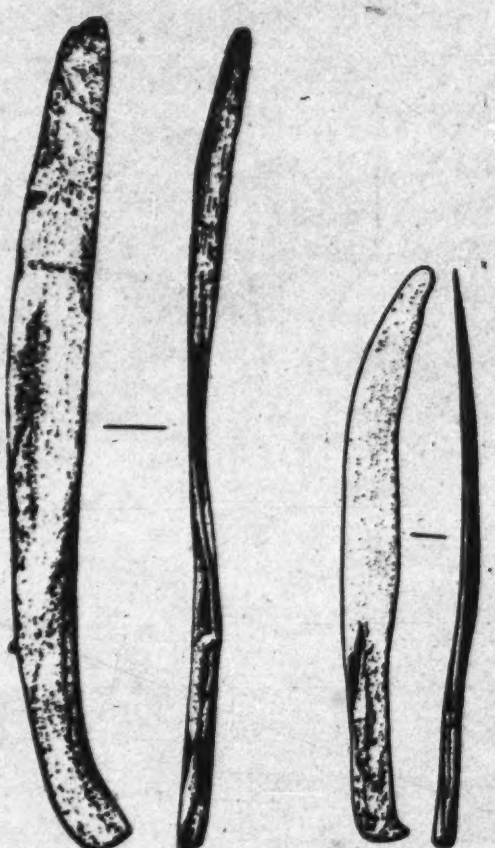

Figure 78. Antler knives for chopping snow. IV.D.188, 278. Approx. 1/3.

[171] These antler knives are identical with those used in the Hudson Bay area for scraping ice from kayaks, but the Copper Eskimo had little or no occasion [462] to employ them for this purpose. A woman sometimes used one to chop snow [342] for filling in gaps between the snow blocks while her husband completed the building of a hut, but even this was unusual.

hardly distinguishable from the antler knife used by the women for chopping snow; but a curving prong in which the point formed nearly an acute angle with the handle made a more efficient tool (Figure 122).

Figure 122. Curved pick of antler. IV.D.1634. 1/4.

Mattocks were seldom required except for two purposes, to secure, in the autumn, mud for plastering the runners of the sleds, and to make shallow pits where the hunter could await unseen the approaching caribou. Some families had no mattocks, but no hunter's equipment was quite complete unless he carried a short straight one in his bow-case. In fact, the usual name for a mattock was *tallulit*, i.e., a tool for making a *tallu* or hunting pit.

Snow Sounder. The main purpose of the snow sounder was to test the depth and compactness of snow with a view to the construction of a snow-hut. Hunters used it occasionally to probe the breathing holes of seals.

The implement was a straight, slender rod of antler[1] roughly 3 feet long, usually shod at the bottom with a peg of bone or musk-ox horn. The handle, of bone or musk-ox horn also, nearly always took the form of a round button drilled to fit the top of the rod (Figure 123). Figure 124, however, shows a specimen with a more elaborate handle.

FISHING EQUIPMENT

Copper Eskimo methods of fishing have been described in Reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, vol. XII, pages 152-157.

Rods, Hooks, and Lines. There were two types of fishing rods. The first was a short stick from a foot to 18 inches long, curved at one end to form a handle, and notched at both ends to wind up the line. The Eskimo often had some difficulty in securing suitable wood for this kind of rod, wood that would bend without cracking. Hence, they frequently spliced two pieces of wood together, or a stick of wood to a handle of antler; or they even made the rod entirely of antler. With dry wood, too, the notches were very liable to break,

[1] Rasmussen obtained a very unusual rod of solid copper (Anthrop. Papers, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. XIV, fig. 4, p. 39 (New York, 1930)).

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

but, lacking the national taste, I slipped most of them surreptitiously to the dogs.

Two of the five families in this tribe crossed to the islands a day earlier than the others. I accompanied the second party, which started out in the darkness of the morning. After traversing the first nine miles without difficulty we came upon rough ice that had been piled into jagged hummocks by the autumn gales, and my light sled, modelled after a European pattern, upset three times before we passed through. The Eskimo sleds were more stable, for their crossbars rested directly on the stout runners, and with the heavier articles, such as stone lamps and bales of meat and blubber, lying at the bottom, the centre of gravity was close to the ground. None of them overbalanced, although they were piled six feet high with the household possessions.

The nearest of the islands was Putulik, "the island pierced with a hole"; for legend stated that a large cave extended under the water from one side to the other. We approached it shortly before dark, and my host sent forward his twelve-year-old son to pick out a house-site. The inexperienced lad chose a spot where the snow was too shallow, but his father, sounding the depth all around with a long stick of antler, quickly found a more suitable location. While the men erected their huts, the women built low ramparts around the outer walls to increase the warmth inside

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

and to serve as storage-places for the bales of clothing. In little more than an hour the lamps burned brightly again in every home and we were dining sumptuously on dried trout and frozen salmon.

The snow-hut of the Eskimo is too well known to require a detailed description. It resembles the upper half of a sphere, slightly flattened at the top, with a diameter at the floor level of about nine feet and a maximum height slightly below six. A low platform covered with musk-ox and caribou robes takes up more than half the floor space; it serves as a bed by night and a place for sitting and working during the day. The entrance, which faces the middle of the platform, is simply a hole at the bottom of the wall large enough for a person to crawl through on hands and knees; a single snow-block at night makes a satisfactory door. To the right (or left) of the entrance is the saucer-shaped lamp for burning seal-blubber; the stone cooking-pot hangs over it, and over the pot is a large tray or rack where boots and mittens are spread out to dry. A table between the lamp and the sleeping-platform completes the furniture, but bags containing meat and blubber, and dishes of various kinds, litter the floor on both sides of the entrance. Finally, a low-roofed passage extending outward from the doorway ten to thirty feet leads into the open air.

The adjoining plan of a two-roomed hut, and the photographs scattered throughout the book, will give

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

342 352 a better idea of its shape and internal arrangements than a lengthy description. Theoretically a snow-hut may be of any size, provided you have ladders, or timber to form a staging. The Eskimos have neither. 345 To build a large dance-hall like that shown in the plan they stand on boxes, bales of clothing, and anything that may be available. So the height of their largest hut never exceeds eight feet, and the diameter is limited to correspond. Being a sociable people, however, two families often share a single dwelling, and two or three others arrange their huts so that they open onto the same passage.

181 342

114 123 264

Imagine us, then, sitting on the edge of the sleeping-platform eating our supper, myself at one end of the line, Mrs. Light at the other facing her table and lamp. The different members of the family are grouped between us, two boys, a grown-up nephew, and lastly Mrs. Light's husband, who naturally has a [431] seat beside his wife. The youngest boy carries presents of fish to the inmates of the other huts, and two little girls who return with him, bringing similar offer-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

abandoned their huts. Those who had windows of ice in their houses removed them and passed their goods through the gap; and those who had no windows cut large holes in the walls, which they could fill up with a snow-block or two if they wanted to reoccupy the huts. But the Eskimos seldom returned to the same habitations; old houses remained deserted until the spring, when they melted slowly away under the warm rays of the sun. Passing travellers might occupy them for a night, but even they generally preferred to build new houses, which were warmer and more comfortable. Hence one could readily discover all the winter movements of these Eskimos by tracking down the villages they had successively deserted between October and May.

Our migration along the coast resulted in a new settlement of snow-huts a few yards out from the beach. It was too early in the winter to camp far from shore, for a violent gale might break the level ice-field into drifting floes. Even the light gale that sprang up four nights later produced a large tide-crack under two houses that lay more to seaward than the rest. Misfortune ruled that I should be sleeping in one of them. The snow-blocks cracked one after another, with loud reports like pistol-shots, and the walls split from ceiling to floor. Then the water poured up through the tide-crack and flooded the hut nearly to the level of the sleeping-platform. My hostess, stepping down to

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relight the lamp, sank up to her knees in the icy slush; her terrified shriek made us leap from our beds in alarm. Fortunately the water rose no higher during the night, or we might have had difficulty in escaping to the land. As it was we were able to wait until daylight, when we cut a hole through the back wall and transported our belongings to a safer home beyond the reach of the tide.

I marvelled at the time that the roof of the dwelling did not cave in upon our heads. But a snow-hut is remarkably solid once the warmth inside has converted its walls to ice. Soon after this gale I visited the hut in which I was nearly asphyxiated a few weeks before, and the native who accompanied me stood on its highest block without disaster. He mounted cautiously, it is true, for even ice must be fairly thick to withstand a pressure of 150 pounds; and the walls of this hut were still mainly snow, for we had occupied it only one night. But it was a striking test of the solidity of a snow-house, and explained why the entire half of a dwelling may be cut away without disturbing the other half.

There were so many things of interest in our new settlement, so much that was novel and strange to record in my note-books each evening, that the days passed almost unnoticed. The Eskimos themselves knew nothing of days or weeks; they kept no reckoning even of the months, only of the changing seasons as they affected the food supply.

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[A 42-D]

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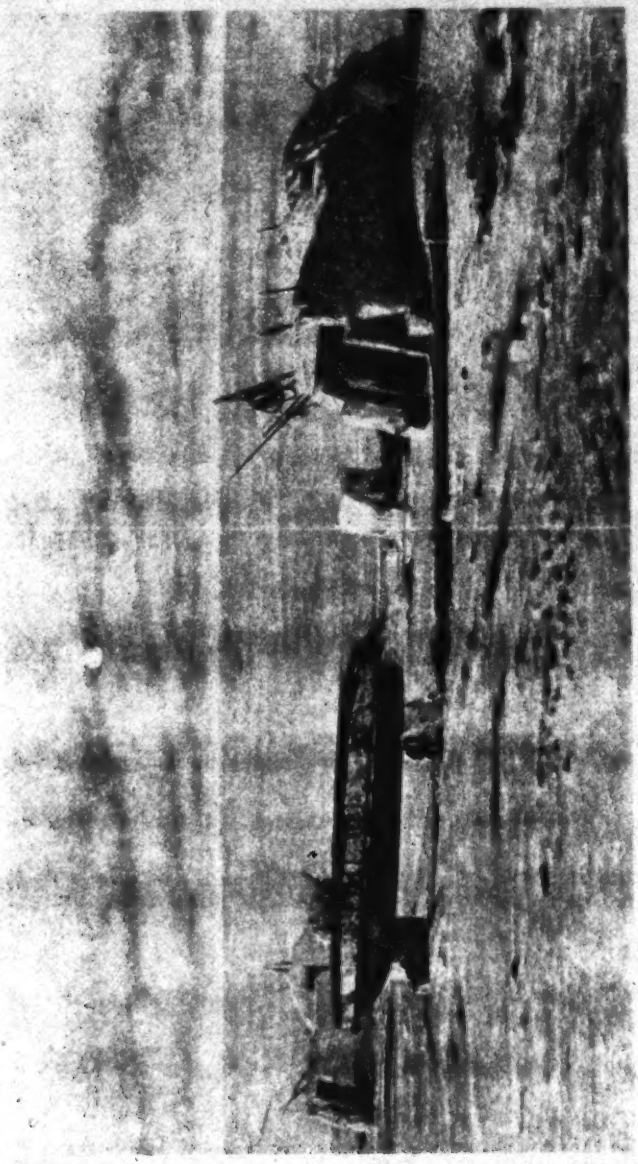

The snow-hut.

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They built their settlement close to the beach.

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speak the white man's language and perform his intricate dances.

The performance ended at last, and the people began to disperse to their huts. Cockney, who was among the first to vanish, hastened to the station to describe my abnormal behaviour and organize a strong party that would bring me safely home. But before he had finished his narrative I myself arrived on the scene and offered a more reasonable explanation of my conduct.

The natives living out in the strait became very friendly again when the charge of murder was lifted from my head. I visited their settlement twice for periods of three or four days, staying each time with my old acquaintance, Ikpuck. The sun was now much higher in the sky, and a mildness in the atmosphere indicated the approach of spring. Snow-huts would soon be untenable; the slight melting of their ceilings around noon had already caused some of the people to move into large tents made of caribou skins. With the advent of longer days the hunters captured more seals, and the women were packing the surplus blubber into large bags to cache on the coast until autumn. Everything seemed to be changing. The various bands that had united in midwinter were separating out again and moving to different sealing-grounds; and every fortnight, as the new sealing-grounds became exhausted, they moved their settlements forward a few more miles.

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ing my brief absence. It was now mid-April, and the natives were travelling in easy stages toward the land, allowing a few days between each migration for the women and children to freight forward the pokes of blubber and the men to resume their sealing. All the families had adopted skin tents in place of snow-houses, or, if their tents were still cached on the coast, they roofed circular walls of snow with the skins of caribou and musk-oxen. The camp was mottled with clothing, suspended from sticks, to dry in the warm sun; and at every little snow-flurry the women rushed from the tents to beat the light flakes from each garment before they melted and spoiled the fur. Night and day had merged into one another, the sun disappearing for one hour only at midnight; and the temperature remained fairly constant around 15°F., except at noon, when it mounted at times to the freezing-point.

The younger women, who were as well versed as the men in the peculiar habits of the seal, often went out with the hunters to escape the monotonous care of clothes and blubber. Each seal appeared to have its special territory, like a bird in the nesting season; and every half-hour or so it came to the surface to breathe. In summer, with open water all around, it rose at any place; but when the sea froze in the autumn it could reach the atmosphere only by breaking through the thin sheet of ice that covered its domain. The breathing-holes made at that season remained open

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easily on runners of steel. The Chatterbox and his family, who came next in the line, had abandoned their sled and hitched their dogs to a polar-bear skin that carried all their possessions. Last of all came Parted-Hair's sled, in the same condition as Ikpuck's. The Listener and his wife, too old to make unnecessary journeys, remained at the lake to watch over the meat and fish we had spread out on boulders to dry in the sun.

Twelve miles from the Lake of Dancing we sighted caribou and shot a large bull. We camped beside its carcass, and the women, who had failed to bring stone lamps and blubber, trusting to cook over open fires, searched the ridge-tops for fuel. But the season was less advanced on this side of the divide and vegetation scarcer, so that they found no fuel of any kind, not even the wretched dryad. I boiled a little venison for myself on the primus lamp, but the rest dined quite cheerfully on raw meat. Their tents, too, they had left behind, but they propped up two caribou robes for shelter from the breeze and spread out their sleeping-bags under the open sky. I fell asleep to the murmur of the dance-song they were practising for the meeting with the Tormiat from the Great Sound.

Big Lake, which we reached late the next evening, appeared to be circular in outline and about ten miles in diameter. We camped near its southern end, where we found old camp-sites, although the lake itself was silent and deserted.

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342 The Tormiat from the Great Sound did not arrive on the morrow. Instead, from their country came a blustering snow-storm that swirled and eddied around our camp for thirty-six hours. The wretched wind-breaks behind which the Eskimos crouched for shelter blew down in five minutes. My tent alone stood firm. It was 6¼ feet long, 5 feet wide, and 4 feet high, admirably adapted for one man, but a trifle small when Ikpuck and Icehouse shared it with me, as they did from now until autumn. Small or not, it was the only shelter that presented itself. While the men were building low walls of snow-blocks, and roofing them with sticks and skins into the semblance of dwellings, the women and children huddled inside my tent, one on top of another, and on top of Ikpuck and me, until the blizzard outside would have seemed a zephyr had we been able to reach it. But the door was blocked by a solid wall of humanity encased in fur, and the back of the tent was sewn to the floor-strips. Like bees in the centre of a hanging swarm, we almost suffocated; but we were warm.

231 The dogs howled all through the night, a big, grey-haired scoundrel being the worst offender. Icehouse, who had named it after her grandfather, yelled to it unceasingly, "Lie down there, my grandfather. You have done no work today. You have been well fed. Have you no bottom to your stomach?" The Eskimos in the neighbouring tents shouted every time they heard

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Photo by G. H. Wilkins.

Dance-songs were their chronicles of current events.

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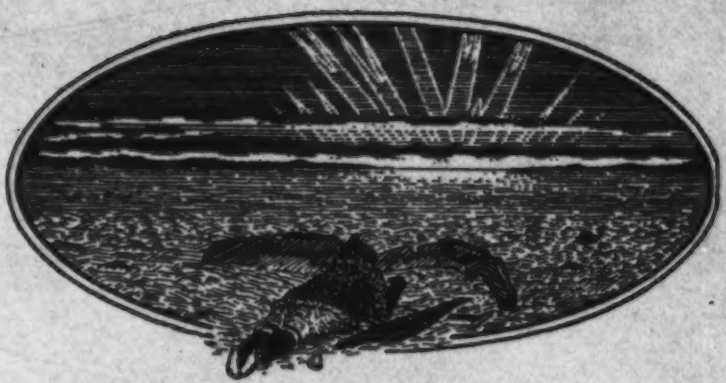

CHAPTER X

DARKENING DAYS

IKPUCK chose for our tent-site a level patch of ground beside a small lake that filled a dip in the rolling plain behind Dryad Harbour. Through a hole in the ice we drew our water, and for fuel we used the dwarf willow that grew abundantly all around, or burned the yellow fat of the polar bear in a naturally hollow stone. Low ridges blocked the view on all sides, shutting out even the sea four miles away; but the ridge to the north overlooked a long valley so rich in moss that we expected the migrating caribou to make it their highway. On the crest of this ridge, therefore, we built a low semi-circular wall of stones, chinked with snow, that would both conceal and shelter the watcher; and every morning, at dawn, some one visited the look-out post to search

DARKENING DAYS

matter. He pretended to be sound asleep when she 578
stole in, and the camp relapsed into silence, except that 593
now and then a low sob issued from the tent of The [123]
Chatterbox, who had disciplined his wife by tearing
her coat from top to bottom. Icehouse was unusually
quiet in the morning, and our visitors departed abruptly
for the hills. So once more our tent stood solitary.

In order to protect ourselves more effectively from 342
the weather we moved into the sealskin cooking-tent,
built a low rampart of turf around its base, and cov-
ered the roof with caribou hides. The small lamp 354
that Icehouse had discovered on a grave kept our new
quarters comparatively snug, and its pale, warm glow
streaming through the half-open door guided us home
in the darkness from our weary hunts. The weather 182
was stormier now, the nights much longer; in a few
more weeks the sun would set for its midwinter sleep.
This shortness of the daylight restricted our excur- 132
sions, so that we added no more than two caribou to 224
the total we had laid aside in our caches. Sometimes [512]
we did not go hunting at all, but kept watch in turn
from the look-out post and scraped caribou hides inside
the tent. Icehouse made herself a pair of trousers 294
from a skin that I scraped, and, rising at 2 A.M. a morn- 123
ing or two afterward, made a similar garment for
me by the light of her blubber-lamp. So the days 484
passed monotonously. At last Ikpuck decided that it

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was useless to stay any longer. We packed all the skins to his cache on the coast, recovered the sled that he had abandoned there in the spring, and set out for the Lake of Dancing.

At our first halting-place in the hills we found a deep snow-drift firm enough to make the perpendicular walls of a hut, but not to form its roof. By digging out and building up we contrived a circular enclosure five feet high at the floor level and six feet in diameter, exactly the size that we could cover with our summer cloth tent; and we extended its front with the sealskin tent to give Icehouse more space for cooking. Our heads almost touched the roof as we sat on the sleeping-platform, eating our supper; but the hut was so warm and cosy after the drafty tent we had occupied that we turned into our beds with every anticipation of a comfortable night. Outside the snow fell heavily, and the big soft flakes massing deeper and deeper on the roof sagged in the canvas and crushed down the walls. A feeling of oppression roused me during the early hours of the morning, and I tried to sit up, but my head came into violent contact with the ceiling before my shoulders left the bed. The shout I gave awakened the whole family; for a moment no one comprehended what had happened to us. Then Ikpuck and I, heaving together, lifted the roof a few inches, crawled off the platform, and lit the lamp. Little Knife-Blade followed us without difficulty, but the well-

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nourished Icehouse wriggled in her bag for several minutes before she tumbled, like an enormous chrysalis, head foremost onto the floor.

We occupied a real snow-hut at the Lake of Dancing, one that had been erected by our companions a week or more before. Here we dismantled our caches of dried meat and dried fish, and recovered my sled, the big spring tent, and all the other things we had deposited at this place in the early days of summer. Foxes, worming their way through sundry chinks and crevices in the stones, had destroyed all the sinew fishing-lines; fortunately we had plenty of cod-line that could take its place. More serious was the destruction of the white-bellied caribou hides from which Icehouse had intended to make some finely ornamented costumes for the winter dances; but I assuaged her grief by promising to purchase other hides for her when the tribes reassembled at the sealing-grounds. We sighted one of the marauding foxes near our camp, and lured it within range by squeaking like a young bird; but Ikpuck's bullet struck only the ground between its legs, and, though deluged with snow, it escaped without injury.

After fishing in various lakes for a few days with little success we overtook our companions at the source of a creek that flows into Dryad Harbour. They had abandoned all further hunting and fishing on the land under the pressure of colder weather and were return-

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136 although a sudden storm that shatters the ice-field may still engulf a few animals before they have time to regain the shore.

136 The second wave of the migration passed even more
261 quickly than the first, and we found ourselves on a barren coast, cut off from every source of food except the stores that we had accumulated during the months just past. The seals had vanished with the open water, the true fishing-lakes lay back in the hills, and the salmon-trout that Ikpuck had speared in lakes nearer the coast had either ceased to spawn, or were invisible through the crust of snow. Occasionally we sighted two or three ptarmigan, never enough for a single meal; and at the mouth of the creek, three or four feet under the ice, the children speared a few sculpins, and
221 devoured them on the spot. But we had now reached the "doldrum" stage in our voyage, the resting period that intervenes between the intense activity of the caribou hunt and lake-fishing, and the winter sealing on the
221 ice. So with a feeling almost of permanency we estab-
361 lished our tiny settlement on the sea-shore, knowing that we should remain there longer than at any place
• [342] since the preceding winter. We built our snow-huts with more than usual care, and the women improved them by fixing over the doorways windows of fresh-
221 water ice chipped from a neighbouring lagoon. From
294 morning till night they sat inside beneath their windows, sewing the new garments we needed for the

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157 "Perhaps."
123 "You can use it for dog-food, you know."
"Yes." And I continued on.
"By the way, I'm Big-Tooth, you know."
"Yes, Big-Tooth."
"By the way—". But I pretended not to hear him and hurried to overtake Patsy. Big-Tooth was a good fellow and deservedly popular; yet even his countrymen, whose own minds moved in constant circles round the material present, took to flight whenever he joined in a conversation.

342 On reaching the islands we erected a tent inside an unusually large snow-hut that opened into Ikpuck's dwelling. This was an admirable arrangement for
[354] two reasons; the hut gave us shelter from the wind,
[313] and the tent made it possible to set up a stove where we could burn some of the driftwood that lined the
124 western beaches of the island. Here, with more pri-
126 vacy, we made another attempt to investigate the mythology and religion of the people. Ikpuck and Icehouse gladly told us all they knew, and though not well versed in the traditional lore of their people, they could direct us to better informants. We then closeted ourselves with two old men, whose hearts we warmed with some hard biscuits and cups of steaming chocolate. The comfortable tent and the unusual beverage loosened their tongues, and when one man

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pleasure jaunt at this season, and I could search the coast-line for the ruins of ancient habitations.

The journey, outward and return, lasted three weeks, for we travelled leisurely, enjoying to the full the clear atmosphere and bright, warm sunshine that had succeeded the winter blizzards and cold. Patches of bare ground here and there relieved the monotony of the white snow, the chirping of spring birds filled the air, and numerous seals basked on the surface of the ice outside their breathing-holes. We saw several tent-rings near the shore, and an arrow and other objects lying beside two human skulls, grim relics of a forgotten tragedy. But what intrigued us most was the discovery of three stumps, rotted almost to ground level, that indicated quite clearly the site of an exceedingly ancient house.

All the Eskimo tribes in the western Arctic, where the coast-line is littered with large spruce and cottonwood trees brought down by the Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers, dwell in houses built of wood. But driftwood is so scarce in the Coronation Gulf area that the natives often made long journeys overland to distant forests in the interior in order to obtain even the small amount of timber required for sleds and narrow tables. Their only fixed dwellings were the huts of snow with which we had become so familiar; houses built wholly or partly of wood were entirely outside their knowledge. Even their traditions failed to record such houses,

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although they mentioned huts of stone, still standing in certain places, that a race of dwarfs had built in earlier days. Could it be that the natives had simply forgotten the customs of their forefathers, or was this wooden house in their country a relic of some ancient tribe that had either moved westward or become extinct?

Many small differences between the Eskimos here and their kinsmen in the Mackenzie River delta spoke in favour of the second theory. The Coronation Gulf people possessed no large open boats such as the western natives used for travelling along the coast, and they never employed the one-man canoes or kayaks for hunting seals. Their tools and weapons were much less varied, their clothing of different pattern, and their skill in carving greatly inferior. Altogether their culture seemed less developed than that of the western Eskimos, although the people themselves were not inferior in intelligence.

A year later Girling excavated a wooden house close to the ruin we had discovered on this journey. The objects he recovered from its floor, after removing the surface soil, were entirely strange to the local Eskimos, although familiar to some Alaskan natives, who had unearthed many similar specimens in their own country. Since then one discovery has succeeded another, so that today we know that the people among whom I wandered for two years had themselves moved into